

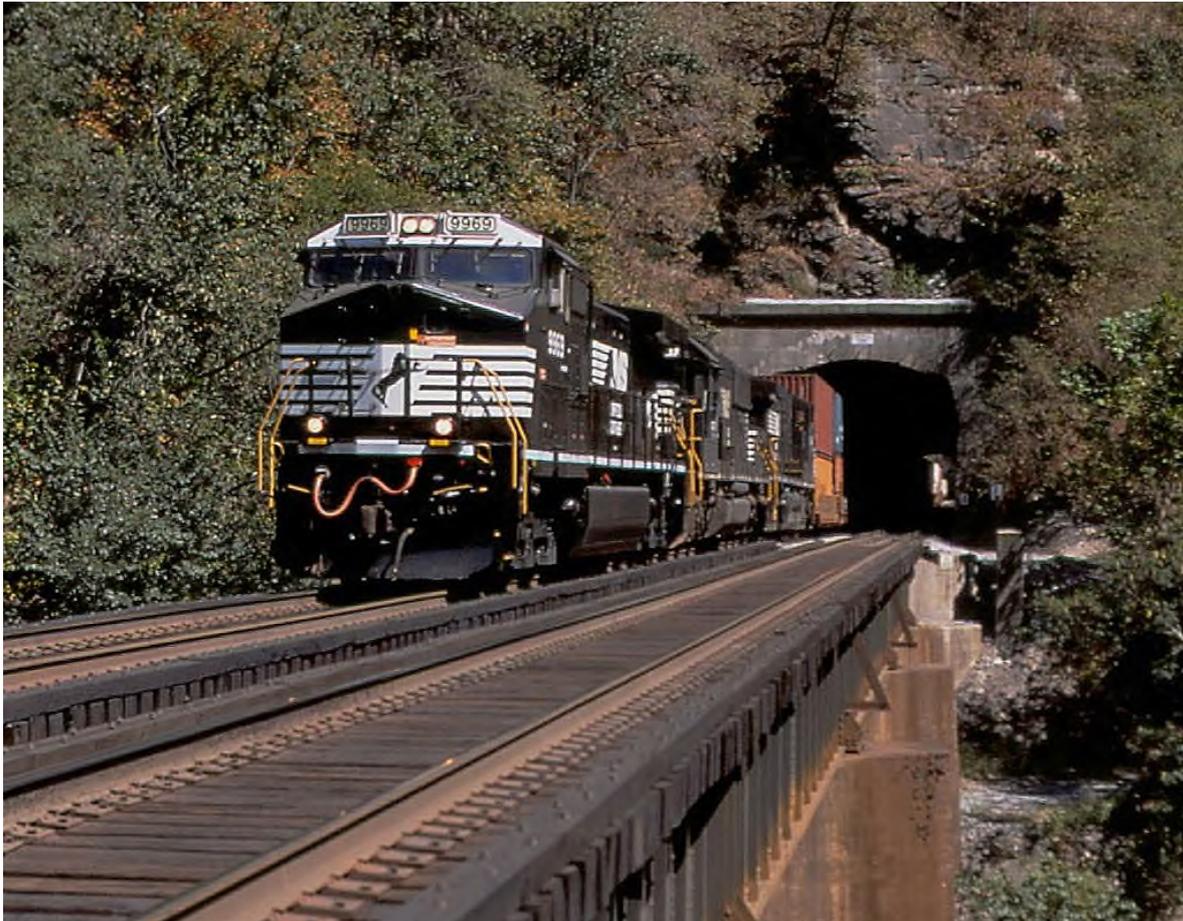


BLUE RIDGE DISPATCHER

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With NS #9969 on the point, Norfolk Southern's second Heartland Corridor double-stack train rolls across Elkhorn Creek at Roderfield Tunnel on September 10, 2010. If this beautiful photo looks familiar to you then you must be a reader of "Trains" magazine. This was the cover shot taken by Bob Eisthen for the September, 2011 issue. Norris Deyerle will present a slide show at this month's regular meeting on 6-11-14. It will feature photos by Bob Eisthen {pronounced Easton}, James DuBose, Charles and Chris Lanphere, Marc Grinter, T.B. Bailey and others. Please plan to attend. Remember friends and guests are always welcome!

Wednesday, June 11, 2014. 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. May 14, 2014

President Rick Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at Charley's Restaurant and welcomed 19 members and 3 guests.. Rick noted the death of Fred Reburn on May 7. Fred was a retired N&W employee who worked for many years in Island Yard in Lynchburg and was noted for his fine wooden models of N&W steam engines. He also reported that the C&OHS had sent a thank you letter for the chapter's donation. The April minutes were approved as distributed. Treasurer John Tanner then reported.

Old Business: The Amherst Station restoration is progressing. And it was announced that the Tidewater Chapter of the NMRA would meet at Fort Eustis in June. The meeting will be open to all.

Vice President Ed Fielding reported that Norfolk Southern has sold sections of the Murphy Branch in North Carolina to the Blue Ridge Southern and WATCO will be the designated operator. National Representative Bob Leslie reported on the recent Regional Meeting where the Board of Directors approved a move to e-mail membership renewals and changed the "Telegraph" distribution so that all members will receive it. The 2013 financial statement is still not out, perhaps not until the annual meeting. A pie chart of operating income and expenses was distributed and the decided to incorporate "NRHSFUND Inc." as a parallel organization to control grants. 2014 Annual Meeting will be held in Arkansas and the 2015 convention will be in Rutland, VT. Al Weber has announced his candidacy for president, opposing incumbent Greg Malloy. Bob also brought greeting from Pete Echols, long-time chapter national director who offered old Trains magazine for give away. Norris Deyerle moved and Ed Fielding seconded a motion to reimburse the National Representative for meeting expenses. Motion passed without dissent. Regional Heritage Director Norris Deyerle announced that the Rail Day posters were ready for distribution and thanked George Riley of Carstens Publications for providing the artwork and printing. Norris noted that Jean Raas still needed help with the model and photography contests. Bob Leslie and Chuck Hladik offered their help. Rick announced that he needed someone to organize the Chapter picnic in September. Thanks were offered to Newsletter Editor Garland Harper and there was no Webmaster report.

The program was presented by Ed Fielding on the DM&IR. The planned Susquehanna program would not play. Fun Meeting on May 28 will be digital featuring Rick's photographs of the recent CSX wreck in downtown Lynchburg. Rick also announced that the July 23 Fun Meeting will be presented by Chase Gunnoe. Norris won the 50/50 and the meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Thomas G. Ledford, Secretary

Welcome to the Blue Ridge Chapter - We'd like to welcome aboard new members Steve Layman of Charlottesville and Len Rogers of Altavista. We appreciate your interest in the railroad hobby and our local NRHS Chapter in particular. Happy to have you!

SIGHTINGS

May 26 - CSX business car train deadheading up the James River spotted at the Reusens Dam. (G. Harper)

Jun. 8 - Train consisting of four brand new gallery cars for the Virginia Railway Express seen northbound behind Kemper St. Station. (G. Harper)



St. Louis Museum of Transportation and Virginia Museum of Transportation to trade historic locomotives.

NORFOLK, VA. May 28, 2014 – The [Museum of Transportation](#), St. Louis, and the [Virginia Museum of Transportation](#) are in discussions to bring Norfolk and Western Y6a steam engine #2156, currently in the St. Louis museum, back to its place of origin at Roanoke, Va., on a five-year loan for display at the Virginia museum, in a transaction facilitated by Norfolk Southern.

In exchange, the Virginia museum will send to St. Louis a Southern Railway diesel General Motors EMD FTB unit to complement the St. Louis museum's FTA demonstration unit.

"This will reunite the last surviving Y-class locomotive, one of the hardest pulling steam locomotives ever built, with the J-611 and the A-1218 in Roanoke, where all three were designed and built by Norfolk and Western," said Molly Butterworth, cultural site manager for the St. Louis Museum of Transportation. "In return, our historic FTA, built in 1939 to demonstrate to the rail industry the efficiency of diesel power, will be reunited with its complimentary B unit."

"We are thrilled to welcome the Y6a home again," said Bev Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation. "We're grateful to the St. Louis Museum of Transportation for this opportunity to reunite three powerful sisters of steam in their home town."

The Museum of Transportation, a St. Louis County Park in west St. Louis County, Mo., houses what has been recognized as one of the largest and best collections of transportation vehicles in the world. With over 70 locomotives, half of them "one-of-a-kind" or "sole survivors" of their type, the Museum has one of the most complete collections of American railroad motive power, and its collections of automobiles, buses, streetcars, aircraft, horse-drawn vehicles, and riverboat materials are constantly expanding to reflect the ever-changing nature of transportation.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation, Virginia's official transportation museum, is home to two of the most powerful steam locomotives in existence today: the N&W Class A 1218 and the N&W Class J 611. The Museum attracts visitors of all ages from across the U.S. and around the world. Through exhibits, artifacts, and an outstanding collection of rail equipment, cars, trucks, airplanes, and more, the Museum tells the story of Virginia's rich transportation history.

- www.nscorp.com

Searching for Spring on the Crescent – Part 2 (Continued from the May, 2014 BRD) by Skip "Groundhog" Hansberry

For breakfast I was seated with two ladies from Philadelphia. We solved all the world's problems as I enjoyed my omelet, grits, and raisin toast at a leisurely pace.

We departed Atlanta on time and after passing Howell Yard Wye we entered what could arguably be called the heart of the Norfolk Southern, a fifteen mile stretch of track between Atlanta and Austell where the CNO & TP joins the "main line". At Austell traffic from the industrial North joins interchange traffic from the western roads at St. Louis and Memphis to funnel into Atlanta. Accordingly, we met six trains in the first half hour out of Atlanta –in this brief period I saw power representing all the North American Class I roads except CP.

By now it had started to rain...I returned to my room where Patrick had left the USA Today. So what if it was two days old, the crossword puzzle was still new to me. As we entered Alabama I spent a minute changing the time zone on my Nikon; this was a task I certainly didn't have to do forty-five years ago with my Argus C3.

Next stop: Anniston. As we slowed for the station I spotted a sign on an auto shop proclaiming it to be "Cooter's Detail" – the only other time I ever heard that name was on "The Dukes of Hazard". The architecture of the brick station here was Southern through and through. It even still sported the silver letters spelling out "Southern Railway System" over the entrance. I had never been here before, but had a personal interest in this town. My parents got married here only months before my father shipped off to Europe in 1944.

The Amtrak pamphlet refers to the Anniston Army Depot located near here – this facility is the only one in the U.S. for the repair of tracked military vehicles. For years it was also a site where chemical weapons were stored before being destroyed. Sure enough, a few minutes out of the station we began to pass a huge, sprawling group of buildings. I don't know how fast we were going, but this installation stretched on and on

and on. Finally, I spotted a number of tanks – some appeared to be quite old – perhaps there is a museum here one could visit.

We were now passing through rural country filled with pine trees and limestone cuts. This was mostly single track, certainly not to be confused with high speed rail. I know there is some padding in the schedule, but the timetable allows 1:50 to traverse the sixty-four miles between Anniston and Birmingham, roughly thirty-five mph. I consulted my 1967 OAG – this was almost identical to the pace of the “Southerner” in that era.

At milepost 771, a bit west of Anniston, we passed through a short tunnel – it's the only tunnel on the Southern main line south of Lynchburg. There certainly wasn't much that needed to be done here when the double stacks started rolling.

At Lincoln a pair of BNSF GE's were working the Honda plant there. A few miles east of Birmingham I spotted my first “Retro Belle” – KCS 4690, a very handsome ES44AC.

As we were entering Birmingham I looked up and was quite surprised to see Frisco Mike 4019 behind a chain link fence. This was a USRA locomotive built in 1919, then sold to the Frisco in 1923. It toiled for its owner for thirty years until its retirement in 1952, after which it was placed on display. In 2009 it was cosmetically restored and moved to its current location.

Just beyond this locomotive I saw another relic from the past: the Sloss Blast furnaces seemed to rise forever toward the sky. If there was one symbol representing both Birmingham and the Industrial Age, this was it. For over ninety years it turned out tons of pig iron before our changing economy rendered it obsolete in 1971. It was saved by the city of Birmingham and designated a National Historic Landmark. It is the only one of its kind in the U.S. where one can take a tour of such a facility. Huge. Impressive. Iconic. Definitely worth a visit! Hiding nearby in some trees was what appeared to be a Baldwin switcher.

Our double track merged with two more at Woodlawn Junction where the track layout would make any modeler proud. By now we were creeping along...I saw a pair of NS units in the distance. Closer to us was a pair of BNSF units: 1557, a rare SD38P, still in green, and 1596, an SD40-2 in Heritage I paint.

The Birmingham station was a rather depressing place...decrepit was the word that came to mind. The cold, damp air didn't help to change my opinion. Patrick did say that plans were in place for the construction of a new facility. There was a large contingent boarding here; many appeared to be students returning to the University. I saw a number of individuals wearing apparel adorned with red “A's”, crimson, I presume, not scarlet.

Nearby in the station sat a very forlorn-looking baggage car lettered for Civil Defense. Perhaps in the 1950's it was used for some type of preparedness training. Barely discernible were the letters “CAGY”, i.e., Columbus and Greenville. Patrick told me this car had been sitting here in the station the entire time he had been working for Amtrak. I read somewhere that it was originally built for the IC in 1911, then “modernized” at some point. Briefly after our departure from the Steel City I saw the next harbinger of spring – red buds in bloom – progress was being made as we made our way farther south.

About an hour from Birmingham we eased to a stop in Tuscaloosa and were soon met by our northbound counterpart. We then proceeded to back out of what must've been a stub end siding. I caught a glimpse of Bryant-Denny Stadium where many a gridiron foe has left in disappointment. The very appealing Southern brick station had a rounded turret which made one think “castle”. This facility appeared to be both well maintained and well utilized, as there was a sizable crowd awaiting our arrival. Just a general observation: most college/university communities seem to be dependable supporters of rail travel, not just vocally, but with their wallets.

My watch said it was just after 1:00 CDT, but my stomach was still on EDT, so I joined two ladies from the suburbs of Boston for lunch. It's not often that I use the words “healthful” and “delicious” in the same sentence, but both adjectives accurately described my salad of chicken served on a bed of spinach with blue cheese crumbles. And, it was very attractively presented. If we'd only had bone china and a genuine tablecloth I would've truly been transported back to the 50's. Only one downside...it could've been a bit more generous, so I guiltily ordered the cheesecake for dessert. With blueberries on the side and a plump red strawberry riding on top, it was both a visual and gustatory delight.

A bit east of Meridian we met a Herzog ballast train with two gray KCS SD's bracketing a “Retro-Belle”. At Meridian there was a nice-looking Meridian and Bigbee caboose on display along with a heavyweight car lettered for L&N and an ex-Southern streamlined coach, both in a badly deteriorated state.

At some point I learned that dinner would be an abbreviated event. I wasn't surprised because I had had a similar experience two years ago on the Texas Eagle. Serving hours were from 5:00-5:45 and the menu was labeled "Amtrak Express Menu" – the express was the meal, not the train. My tablemates at this meal were a young military man and a couple returning home to Houston via tomorrow's "Sunset". The wife worked at a Hobby Lobby in Houston and the man spent his money there – turns out he was an avid modeler in both N and G. We ended up exchanging e-mail addresses so I could send him some pix from my journey. So many times I have noted the vast difference in the sense of camaraderie on the train versus that on an airplane.

The express menu choices were limited to sandwiches, burgers, salads, and a pasta special. I opted for the pasta and was told it was the last one. Big mistake; cold and tough, far beyond al dente, and rather tasteless as well.

By now the clouds had disappeared and I was content to watch the sun set over Lake Pontchartrain. At one point I was confident we would arrive considerably ahead of schedule, but after some very slow running followed by a back-up move into the station, we arrived almost exactly on the advertised. Three tracks over sat a string of Superliners. I was told this was the "Sunset", but I was confident it was I Arlo Guthrie's favorite train. There was still just enough light in the sky to silhouette the tops of the gleaming stainless steel. I tipped Patrick and thanked him for his patient conversation, then made my way into the station. I had learned that Patrick works the extra board, sometimes sleeping car attendant, sometimes coach attendant, sometimes in the diner. He really didn't care what...he just wanted to work as much as possible.

The station was certainly no grand masterpiece – other than some attractive murals depicting the history of New Orleans, I found it a bit institutional. It was built a few years post-WW2 when things began to be designed more for their functionality rather than overwhelming beauty. There was a considerable wait for the checked baggage; it was done "cruise ship style", i.e., all placed in an enclosed area where each individual retrieves his bag and shows his claim check stub before being allowed to leave.

Outside there was a long line waiting for the taxis which showed up only sporadically. Finally, it was my turn to be whisked off to Kenner where I would spend the night before renting a car in the morning to continue my odyssey. As I mentioned at the beginning, I planned to visit my cousins and elderly uncle in Alexandria, then drive to Houston and pick up my wife the following evening.

At this juncture I had no way of knowing how hard Mother Nature would strive to discombobulate our plans. On March 25 an intense snowstorm hit the mid-Atlantic, dumping six inches of snow on Lynchburg in a short time. My wife's regional jet flight was de-iced in preparation for departure, but the time window expired before they got off the ground. So they came out to de-ice again and the equipment malfunctioned. The flight was cancelled, and in today's world of full flights my wife was not able to get to Houston until more than twenty-four hours later. We did finally reach San Antonio and I was subsequently able to get my much anticipated railfanning in at Corsicana, Big Sandy, and Marshall.

P.S. Our local NRHS Chapter (Blue Ridge) swaps newsletters with many other chapters via e-mail. I try to at least look at each and find many of the articles both entertaining and informative, especially the travelogues. If you happen to come across this and find it enjoyable, I would very much appreciate hearing from you at my e-mail: groundhogtales@yahoo.com.
Skip Hansberry

Spencer! - Several Blue Ridge Chapter members were able to make it down to Spencer, NC, to the "Streamliners at Spencer" event held at the North Carolina Transportation Museum May 29 - June 1. Your Editor spent the day Friday, May 30 .

26 historic locomotives from the early days of diesel-electric power in America were brought to Spencer from many locations around the country for viewing. Most of the engines were still able to operate under their own power. One exception to the diesel streamliner cavalcade was the presence of N&W's Class-J 4-8-4 #611. This streamliner had been towed from the Virginia Museum of Transportation to Spencer on May 25, not only for the purpose of being part of the show there, but to be re-restored to operating condition!



Many of you are familiar with the "Fire up 611" campaign that has been ongoing for over many months now to raise funds to get the 611 operational once more. (www.fireup611.org) During a welcoming ceremony at the event on May 30, Norfolk Southern's CEO Wick Moorman (right) removed a nut off 611's skirting symbolically marking the beginning of 611's restoration. It has been almost twenty years since 611 operated under its own power, that date being December 7, 1994, when it arrived in Roanoke completing a final ferry move from Birmingham, AL. 611 had been a part of the NS steam program from 1982 until 1994. It ran more years, though not nearly as many miles, in excursion service than it did in revenue service for the N&W (1950-1959).



BRC members at Spencer. Chapter President Rick Johnson - 1 above, and Rick Johnson - 2 above and to the right waiting for the next photo opportunity. Believe me! There were plenty! Oh! What could be more appropriate to grace an armour yellow Union Pacific E9 that a young lady clad in yellow, too. (Dash-1 photo)

Oodles of pictures of the units at Spencer are available on the internet. Try www.railpictures.net and enter Spencer in the keyword box.

Thanks to the NCTM for undertaking the herculean task of getting all these museum pieces to one spot!



Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS 2014 Calendar of Events

56th Anniversary of the Blue Ridge Chapter, A Virginia's Rail Heritage Region Partner

Compiled By Norris Deyerle, Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS Chairman of Virginia's Rail Heritage Region Partners

Newly updated or added events since last month printed in "Bold Italics".

Notice: I urge our friends with the other railway historical groups and museums to take advantage of www.trainfinder.com, www.trains.com or RHICalendar@nrhs.com. There is no cost to promote your train show on these websites. It's simple to add your event to their website and your event approval is fast and efficient. This is a website that will help us all get the word out about our events!

Are you interested in learning more about the historic Norfolk & Western Railway "High Bridge" in Farmville, Va.? Please check out the following links for more info:

Friends of High Bridge Trail: <https://sites.google.com/site/friendsofhighbridgetrail/>

High Bridge Trail State Park: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/hig.shtml

<http://www.virginia.org/Listings/OutdoorsAndSports/HighBridgeTrailStatePark/>

Historical USGS Topographical Maps: A great research tool for locating abandoned railroad lines, etc.

<http://nationalmap.gov/historical/>

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation – Free Official State of Virginia Railroad Map, 600 East Main Street, Richmond, Va. 23219 Phone: 804-786-4440 www.drpt.virginia.gov

Tennessee Valley Railroad/Norfolk Southern 21st Century Steam Train Excursion Schedule Info:

<http://www.tvrail.com/pages/21st-century-steam>

June 2014

06-10-14 Thru 06-14-14: {Tuesday Thru Saturday} NRHS 2014 Annual Convention, Springdale, Arkansas, Info, www.nrhs.com

06-11-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Norris Deyerle Slide Presentation featuring some of today's finest railroad photographers across North America. There will also be some "oldies but goodies" thrown in to take you back to your younger days. I hope to see you there since I'll be showing something for everybody! Bring a friend or a guest and sit back and enjoy my slide show.

06-21-14: {Saturday} North Carolina Rail Fair 11th Annual Model Train & Railroad Artifact Show & Sale, Metrolina Expo Trade Center, Charlotte, NC. Info: www.gserr.com

06-26-14 Thru 06-29-14: {Thursday Thru Sunday} N&WHS 2014 Annual Convention, Roanoke, Va. Info, www.nwhs.org

06-27 & 28-14: {Friday & Saturday} N Scale Enthusiast 22nd Annual 2014 National N Scale Convention Public Train Show, Roanoke, Va. Info: www.nationalnscaleconvention.com

July 2014

07-09-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Derek Wimberly Presentation

07-23-14: {Wednesday} BRC "Very Special Fun Meeting", Chase Gunnoe's "Nighttime Ramblings through the Mountain State" Digital Presentation. This is a presentation that you don't want to miss. Chase is considered by many to be one of today's finest young railroad photographers. Chase is taking his time to drive down from his home in West Virginia to share his photos with us. Let's show Chase our Lynchburg "Southern Hospitality" and have a large welcoming committee waiting for him!

07-28-14 Thru 08-01-14: {Monday Thru Friday} C&OHS 44th Annual Conference, Pipestem, WV, Info, www.cohs.org

August 2014

08-09-14: {Saturday} BRC, NRHS "Lynchburg Rail Day 2014", New show times are 9:00 am till 3:00 pm, Info: LRD 2014 Chairman, Barry Moorefield, Phone: 434-821-2174 before 9:00 pm nightly or email rockdalefarm@live.com, or Norris Deyerle, Phone: 434-237-4912 or email railcow@msn.com. Table Registrar John Tanner, Phone 434-525-1318 or email flytrains@yahoo.com. Note: LRD 2014 Vendor Registration Forms and White Elephant Table Guidelines are now available on our website, www.blueridgenrhs.org

08-13-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Dale Diacont Presentation

September 2014

09-10-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Brad Dobbins Slide Presentation

09-21-14: {Sunday} This is the day that we normally schedule our Blue Ridge Chapter Summer Picnic in Altavista to celebrate the ongoing success of our Lynchburg Rail Day Train Show. It's always been open to BRC members and their guests, LRD Train Show workers and vendors. Attendance has dropped off so much in the past several years that your BRC picnic organizers have not reserved this date at the park in Altavista. If any member or members are willing to organize our Summer picnic in a new location please contact BRC President Rick Johnson or Norris Deyerle. It's OK to set it up on the date the organizer chooses. The BRC will still pay for the fried chicken or other meat and beverages. Please be safety conscious when you choose a location since this is a family event and small children may be attending. I would hate to see this BRC family outing end.

09-24-14: {Wednesday} BRC "Fun Meeting"

October 2014

10-08-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Kurt Reisweber Presentation

10-11&12-14: {Saturday & Sunday} Appomattox Railroad Festival, Appomattox, Va. Contact info: TBD

10-12-14: {Sunday} BRC member Dale Diacont's cookout at "Red Dog Manor" in Waynesboro, Va. BRC members and their guests are invited. Contact Dale for more info. Space may be limited since this is Dale and Audrey's home. Info: daled1acont@yahoo.com to get more details and make sure the cookout is still scheduled.

November 2014

11-02-14: {Sunday} 37th Annual Gaithersburg Railroadiana & Transportation Show, Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Gaithersburg, MD. Info: www.gserr.com

11-08-14: {Saturday} 13th Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club Trains & Railroadiana Show and Sale, Raleigh, NC. Info: www.nrvshow.org

11-12-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Wayland Moore Presentation

11-25-14: {Wednesday} NO BRC "FUN MEETING" DUE TO THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

December 2014

12-06-14: {Saturday} BRC Annual Christmas Banquet, Altavista, Va.

12-10-14: {Wednesday} BRC Monthly Meeting, Skip "Groundhog" Hansberry Presentation

12-20-14: {Saturday} BRC Annual Kemper Street Station Holiday Gathering

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Lynchburg Rail Day 2014. Saturday, August 9, 2014.