



BLUE RIDGE DISPATCHER

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Santa Fe SD45, 5394, leads SF30C, 9500, on a freight train in Texas in the 1980's. Photo by Bledsoe Rail Slides

"And now for something completely different".....Most of my programs from the past have featured eastern railroads, N&W, VGN, Chessie etc. Back in the early 1980's when I became interested in taking train pictures, I also started collecting slide sets from areas and railroads I was not familiar with. I have several Al Chione and Blackhawk Films slide sets. And I also collected several Bledsoe Rail Slides Series sets. Mike Bledsoe was then living in Crowley, TX and shot mainly western roads. I was fascinated by the bright sunshine, blue skies and lack of trees. My early photos taken in West Virginia have none of these things. So come and join us for the March 14th meeting of the BRC as I share some scenes from the 1970's & 1980's featuring the Rio Grande Zephyr, Santa Fe, Katy and several other surprises. Steve Hutchison

Wednesday, March 14, 2018. 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 21, 2018

President Rick Johnson called the meeting to order at Charley's Restaurant at 7:35 p.m. He welcomed 30 members and guests Dona Duval and Denise Mays. Rick noted, that in attendance were several members that we don't get to see often enough, Robin Shavers, Rick Edwards, Ian Whaley, Garland Harper and Howard Gregory. The minutes of the January 10th meeting, as displayed on the Chapter web site, were approved. John Tanner gave the treasurer's report.

Under Old Business, John Tanner read a "thank you" letter from Roanoke Chapter's Carl Jensen thanking the chapter for \$1,000 to be used for a 2018 NRHS Railcamp program. Barry Moorefield has been making preliminary plans for Lynchburg Rail Day, to be held on August 11.

Vice President Gale McKinley thanked those members who have recently pay their dues and contributed to the National Railway Historical Society. Delinquent members were also reminded to pay their annual BRC "local" membership dues of \$13.

Bob Leslie reported that the Winchester Chapter has invited others interested to take part in its anniversary dinner later this year at the Strasburg Hotel.

Editor Garland Harper, in person, thanked those who have been sending him news items and photos for inclusion in "The Blue Ridge Dispatcher."

Rick Johnson announced that Steve Hutchison of Winston-Salem, NC will present a program at the March 14th meeting and that the "Fun Meeting" will be on March 28th. The business meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m. The 50/50 drawing was won by an employee of Charley's.

Rick Johnson presented the program entitled "In the Beginning." Rick showed the earliest rail photos he took after he joined the Blue Ridge Chapter in 1973. He showed how his photography had evolved, and described how his railroad interest has expanded during his many years as a Chapter member..

Lloyd Lipscomb
Secretary

Announcement regarding monthly meeting time

The following is in regards to the change of the Blue Ridge Chapter business meeting start time from 7:30 pm to 7:00 pm implemented in August 2017. To accomplish the 7:00 pm business meeting start time, I shortened our social/dinning time by 30 minutes (6:00 to 7:00). I initiated this to appease several BRC members who were complaining about meeting length and not attending meetings due to this.

My attempt to implement the 7:00 pm business meeting start time over the past seven months has not been very successful. I succeeded only three times to begin the business meeting at approximately 7:00 pm. This was due to no one's fault but my own. It is, however, very difficult to command everyone's attention and conduct business while dining and socializing continues. And that's as it should be...enjoying our dinner and the fellowship of other BRC members and guests is an important part of our getting together.

That said, and due to the fact that the members I was trying to accommodate have not renewed their BRC dues or attended a meeting since this implementation, we are going back to our 7:30 pm business meeting start time.

- Rick Johnson, President

Member news - The Blue Ridge Chapter was notified of the death of Chapter member Warren Middleton, W8CXD, on March 6. Warren is going to be laid to rest in Chillicothe, Ohio. Norris Deyerle recalls that Warren was a hard working member during the early days of the N&WHS. He recalls that he was in charge of dues collections. At a N&WHS Convention Norris had the honor of seeing Warren presented with the N&WHS "Precision Transportation" award that Norris had nominated him for.

Gordon Watkins is recovering from a recent illness. Chapter members and friends are encouraged to send cards to him at home: 151 Westminster Way. Lynchburg, VA. 24503

Franklin & Pittsylvania RR News October 2017 by Tex Delano Carter

In September this year we received some exciting news about the old depot at Sandy Level. Of the four remaining depots it is in the worst condition due to weather damage and, of course, age. Up until about 2015 the depot and almost three acres of land was owned by Peggy Foster of Rocky Mount. She does many things to help the community and gave the land and depot to the Heavenly Manna Food Bank in Rocky Mount .

The food bank recently sold the property to local Sandy Level residents Ted and Bunny Hedrick. They are both very interested in the history of the area and are enthusiastic about restoring the old F&P depot to its original condition. Lou Revelle and I met with Ted and Bunny on the property in late September 2017 and they had already cleared all the brush for a good distance around the depot and all the way to Reddies Creek on the South side. Ted told of going to the depot when he was a young man but by then the train wasn't running.

The new owners are hoping to get a grant from the tobacco commission to help with the cost of repairs. After that we will be asking for donations. They recently got IRS approval making the project a 501c3 organization eligible for tax deductions for anyone donating to the effort.



still in fair condition.

Right: The depot struggles to survive in 2017



Left: This photo was taken c. 1960 – 70 when it was

Norris notes... Make sure that you click on the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad Virtual Tour PDF link that comes with the electronic version of this month's BRD. It has a wealth of information. I had no idea that "The Fast and Perfect" had such an impressive presence in Gretna, Va. Now I see why Gretna has steam loco images on the flags on their street light poles. The virtual tour shows where the train station and yard were. I'm so happy that I took the F&P Virtual Tour. The folks in Gretna say about their town, "It ain't no big thing but it's growing". Gretna appears to have a long way to grow to get back to the boom town that it once was. Interesting historical info. With a total area of 978 sq. miles {969 sq. miles of land and 9 sq. miles of water} Pittsylvania County is the largest county in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It turned 250 years old in 2017. I'm shocked that Hurt, Va. is the county's largest town! Who knew? Pittsylvania County has the largest undeveloped uranium deposit in the United States - and the seventh largest in the world! Thanks to Tex Carter for sharing the F&P Virtual Tour and other field trip information with us. For more info on the F&P Railroad go to

<https://peevishpen.blogspot.com/2017/07/the-f-railroad.html>

Boones Mill (VA) Model Train Show



**SATURDAY MAY 12, 2018
9 AM TO 4 PM**

Building 2 in Village Park, 359 Boones Mill Road.

**Buy, sell, trade railroad memorabilia.
Room for 100 tables.**

**Boones Mill N&W Depot will be open for tours.
Titan Trains will be open for tours (1/8th scale trains).**

**Free Admission!
Food vendors (\$50 sales fee)
Vendor fee: \$35/table (4x8)**

All proceeds go to continuing depot renovations.

Vendor reservations: 540-334-1013 or 540-334-5404

Winter Scenes.

The Lynchburg area finally got a decent snowfall on March 12. This snow storm went on to become the third Nor'easter to lash out at the New England area of the country in nearly as many weeks.. While pretty to look at here, the winds and snow these systems brought to the Northeast really played havoc with Amtrak operations.

Twice Amtrak operations were canceled through Lynchburg. One cancellation was understandable, that being the storm that brought intense, high winds to the area and elsewhere March 2 and 3. Amtrak's NE Corridor suffered much catenary and signal damage. The second cancellation raised a few eyebrows. Trains 50, 51, 145 and 19 were cancelled March 11 because of the mere prospect of a snow storm two days before the event. As it turned out things were clear as a bell around these parts on March 11. Snow fell, gently, on March 12, and trains ran. Go figure.

Your Editor, always looking for a train-in-snow image to put on his Christmas card, was rewarded that day with several possibilities.



Top left: The H751 westbound from the Editor's back yard. It should be noted that this train, H751, and its eastbound counterpart, H750, are recently-added trains on the James River. These two trains now do all the switching work along the line, such as setting off and picking up cars in Lynchburg. Trains Q302 and Q303 used to do this work, but these trains now run through, not stopping at all.

Top Right: Sperry truck inspecting rail in the snow heads west past the hydro plant.

Bottom left: Work train F007 heads west.

Bottom Right: Molten sulphur / anhydrous ammonia combo train, K898, heads east past the hydro plant.

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Lynchburg Rail Day 2018. 40th year! Saturday, August 11, 2018.