



## Tidewater Division

# CALLBOARD

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NMRA MEMBER

November, 2019

### “Tracks Ahead”

**Fred Humphrey, Superintendent**

I would like to thank all the membership for attending the Tidewater Divisional meeting in Suffolk and Portsmouth this year. The attendance has grown from an average of 20 to 25 attendees in September 2019 at Suffolk Train Station and Museum and 34 attendees in Nov 2019 at The Children’s Museum in Portsmouth, VA. This improvement has suggested we may have turned the corner on location for future meeting sites. That’s why I requested the membership to think about where you believe our meeting should be held, how often and what could be associated with the meeting to encourage membership attendants and support our outreach effort.

We have established a meeting schedule for next year to meet at 10 AM, 18 Jan 2020 Lee Hall Train Station and Museum in Newport News; 10 AM, 21 Mar 2020 Southampton Heritage Village and Agriculture Forestry Museum, Courtland VA and 10am, 16 May

*continued on page 5*

### BILL OF LADING – NOV 2019

- 2** The Tom Thumb Locomotive
- 3** NMRA Dues to Increase
- 4** Family Sues UP Over Wrongful Death
- 4** Want To Buy Your Own Railroad?
- 5** Cab Forward Locomotives
- 7** Did PTC Play A Role In Ohio Derailment?

### A Division Member Reminder

The annual Tidewater Division Meeting is scheduled for 18 January 2020, starting at 10am. The schedule includes reports from the board, board member elections and a White Elephant Table.

The January meeting will be held at the Lee Hall Depot. The Depot is located at the corner of Elmhurst St and Warwick Blvd in the Village of Lee Hall.

### This Month in Rail History

Nov 1, 1982: CSX Corporation is founded.

Nov 2, 1953: The Last regularly scheduled steam run, B&O train #22 "The Washingtonian" Eng #5306 Class P7 Washington to Baltimore-Camden Station departs at 6:30 PM.

Nov 7, 1885: Completion of Canadian Pacific Railway, Canada’s first transcontinental railroad.

Nov 1954: President Eisenhower changes Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

Nov 18, 1883: U.S. & Canadian railroads first use Standard Time.

Nov 22, 1915: Milwaukee Road first electrified Pacific Extension train.

Nov 27, 1897: Andrew Beard patents the Jenny Coupler.

“The Callboard” is the newsletter of the Tidewater Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The Tidewater Division, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please direct all questions or concerns to: [sorcerer54@cox.net](mailto:sorcerer54@cox.net)

# The "Tom Thumb" Locomotive

## Lost the Race.....but Won the War

**Tom Thumb** was the first American-built steam locomotive used on a common-carrier railroad. Designed and built by Peter Cooper in 1830, it was designed to convince owners of the newly formed Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to use steam engines. It is especially remembered as a participant in an impromptu race with a horse-drawn car, which the horse won after *Tom Thumb* suffered a mechanical failure. However, the demonstration was successful; and in the following year, the railroad committed to the use of steam locomotion and held trials for a working engine.



The first railroads were little more than tracks on roads: horses pulled wagons and carriages with their wheels modified to ride on the rails. Only when the development of the steam engine had progressed to the point where such an engine could be mounted on wheels could trains be moved by steam power. The first steam locomotives were built in England, the birthplace of steam power; the first locomotives in America were imported from England. Soon, however, Americans began to plan their own locomotives

*Tom Thumb* was designed by Peter Cooper as a four-wheel locomotive with a vertical boiler and vertically mounted cylinders that drove the wheels on one of the axles. The "design" was characterized by a host of improvisations. The boiler tubes were made from rifle barrels and a blower was mounted in the stack, driven by a belt to the powered axle. The engine was fueled by anthracite coal.



Cooper's interest in the railroad was by way of substantial real estate investment in what is now the Canton neighborhood of Baltimore. Success for the railroad was expected to increase the value of his holdings. Construction was carried out in the machine shop of George W. Johnson, where the 18-year-old James Millholland was apprenticed. Millholland would later become a prominent locomotive designer in his own right.

Testing was performed on the company's track between Baltimore and Endicott Mills. Two track

had been constructed, and on August 28, 1830, the driver of a passing horse-drawn car bearing passengers challenged the locomotive to a race. The challenge accepted, *Tom Thumb* was easily able to pull away from the horse until the belt slipped off the blower pulley. Without the blower, the boiler did not draw adequately and the locomotive lost power, allowing the horse to pass and win the race. Nonetheless, it was realized that the locomotive offered superior performance.

*Tom Thumb* was not intended for revenue service, and was not preserved, though Cooper and others associated with the railroad's early days left descriptions which enabled the general dimensions and appearance to be worked out. In 1892, a wooden model was constructed by Major Joseph Pangborn, a western newspaperman and publicist, who also had models made of many other early locomotives. In 1927 the B&O hosted a centennial exhibition near Baltimore, titled "Fair of the Iron Horse," and had a replica constructed for the exhibition. This replica followed Pangborn's model and therefore differed considerably from the original, being somewhat larger and heavier, and considerably taller.

The replica remains on display at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum.

## Tidewater Division

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## NMRA Benefits Information

As an NMRA member, are you aware of discounts on purchased merchandise? Yes, the NMRA partners with multiple manufacturers giving the membership varying discounts when you purchase an item.

For more details, click on [NMRA Partners](#)

## Callboard Subscribers

The Callboard is available for free via e-mail or at the Tidewater Division web-site: <http://www.nmar-mer-tidewater.org/>. Printed copies in B/W are available on request, contact the Callboard editor at [sorcerer54@cox.net](mailto:sorcerer54@cox.net) for details.

## Division Mtg/Contest Schedule

Nov 16, 2019: 10am-Portsmouth Children's Museum of Virginia, 221 High St, Portsmouth VA, Guest Speaker: Skip Novac – Contest: Your Favorite Car

Jan 18, 2020: Annual Meeting & White Elephant Table: 10am, Lee Hall Depot, Elmhurst St, Newport News, VA – Contest: Favorite Train.

## NMRA Announces USA Dues Increase

The NMRA Board of Directors approved a dues increase for USA members, beginning January 1, 2020. Dues without a subscription to **NMRA Magazine**, will be increased from \$47/year to \$50/year. The subscription price for **NMRA magazine** will not be affected. The dues increase is based on the current consumer index. Dues have not been raised since 2017.

## States Seek Overturn of Federal Directive

### Freight Train Crew Size Affected

The states of Illinois, Nevada and Washington are among the latest states that have decided to fight a federal order that prevents states from passing laws that would require freight trains to have a train crew size of at least two individuals.

Nevada has filed a petition with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit asking the court to review a May action by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that prevents states from passing laws mandating train crew size.





## Family Sues Union Pacific Over Delay

### Ambulance Blocked From Hospital

The family of a Bunkie, Louisiana man who died after an ambulance's path to the hospital was blocked for over four hours by a stopped train has filed suit against the Union Pacific Railroad, alleging wrongful death in the matter. The family of Leo Horace Blalock said he suffered a medical emergency on June 27. His wife, Brenda Blalock, called 911. Units from Acadian Ambulance and Bunkie police and fire departments responded. The ambulance was taking Blalock to the nearest hospital, Bunkie General, when it was discovered that the railroad crossings in Bunkie (former SP) were blocked by a Union Pacific train. Police and fire department officials attempted to have the railroad company move the train or make a break to allow the ambulance to get through to the hospital, the suit claims.

The suit states that the Union Pacific dispatcher told the city officials "that the train employees were resting and refused to move the train and/or make a break in the train to allow Leo Horace Blalock to obtain emergency medical treatment." Railroad employees on the site were told there was a man requiring emergency medical treatment, but they also refused to move the train or make a break to allow the ambulance to pass through. The suit says the employees and dispatcher "were aware that a man's life was in danger and knowingly and intentionally refused to move and/or make a break in the train to allow passage to Bunkie General Hospital."

Due to the refusal, the decision was made to airlift Blalock to Rapides Regional Medical Center. This required the ambulance to travel outside the city limits to a sugarcane loading site where a helicopter could land. The suit states Union Pacific is responsible for damages to the family due to several acts of negligence. As a result of this delay, Blalock did not "receive timely life-saving emergency treatment when his life depended on every second," the suit alleges. "The callous indifference to the suffering of another human being by failing to move the train and/or make a break in the train which would allow passage to obtain critical emergency medical treatment by the Union Pacific Railroad Company caused and/or contributed to the untimely death of Leo Horace Blalock."

The family members seek compensation for loss of love and affection; loss of consortium, service and society; loss of enjoyment of life; mental anguish; past, present and future financial support; lost wages and funeral expenses.

## Want To Buy Your Own Railroad South Dakota Has Lines For Sale

The South Dakota RR Board cleared the way last week by voting to proceed with Invitation for Proposals. Currently, there are 1,977 miles of operating rail lines in South Dakota, and the state with the help of private railroad has restored service on 900 previously abandoned rail lines. The South Dakota Dept of Transportation, which includes the South Dakota Railroad Board has performed major rehabilitation on the lines and there are operators on all of the tracks.

According to Karla Engle, chief legal counsel and Special Assistant Attorney General for the South Dakota DOT, there is a growing interest on the acquisition of the lines. The board also will have the freedom to determine the process it is going to use to dispose of the state-owned lines. The South Dakota DOT did confirm that it would not provide any estimates on future taxes to potential buyers.



## Believe It Or Not

### Passenger Cars Had Concrete Floors

Believe it. At one time passenger coaches had a thick poured cement floor. This gave them added weight so they rode wonderfully. This would be on the old heavyweight cars. The wheels on these cars were packed with paper on the inside to quiet the ride. American engineering. Your great grandfather was smarter than you thought.



# Cab Forward Locomotives

## Innovative...but Short Lived

Much is known about the Southern Pacific cab-forward locos built primarily for service through the long snow tunnels over the Sierra Nevada summit in California. Such is not the case about the first loco in regular service to be built incorporating this unique design. The honor goes to loco #21 on the North Pacific Coast RR, a 93-mile narrow gauge line that originally ran from Sausalito just north of San Francisco's Golden Gate northwest to the small town of Cazadero.

Although her official name was the Thomas Stetson, she was better known by the crew as "The Freak." The loco was unique in many ways. Built in the Sausalito shops in 1901 (predating the first SP cab-forward locos by eight years) she was not only one of the first cab-forwards, she was also one of the first oil-fired locomotives. She was also the first loco with automatic air and with 200-lb boiler pressure. Loco #21 was cobbled together from the wrecked frame of an old 4-4-0 and a marine-type water tube boiler (water sent through a series of tubes surrounded by heat) instead of the conventional firetube boiler design, a fact that contributed to her odd appearance since the conventional steam dome was replaced by a large steam collection cylinder mounted just behind the cab. Rather than a conventional rectangular tender, her tender was essentially a flat car upon which rode two vertical cylindrical tanks - the front one carrying fuel oil and the rear one carrying water. The tender also sported a toolbox on the fireman's side and two vertical air tanks on the engineer's side.

Running locomotives in a cab-forward arrangement, or with the engineer in a forward position, was nothing new by the 20th century. In fact, Matthias Forney's locomotive patent of the late 1860s, which combined a small tender tank with the locomotive, was intended for fuel bunker first, or bidirectional running. The idea was that the trailing truck supporting the weight of the bunker would act as the lead truck for more stable running of his compact design. Many of the earlier Forney's were built with this principle in mind, though later locomotives of the type moved toward conventional cab-rearward operation. The first two-foot gauge locomotive built in the US, the 1877 Hinkley-built Ariel for Maine's Billerica & Bedford RR, illustrates the cab forward variant of a Forney, with the pilot and headlamp on the bunker end of the locomotive. While some of the features of loco # 21 such as its oil fired combustion would be repeated in subsequent SPC locos, many other characteristics contributed to its short life. Due to the water tube boiler design, which did not respond well to the inherently large fluctuations in steam demand needed by a locomotive, #21 was constantly wanting for steam. Additionally, the orientation of the atomizer (burner) in the firebox wore out the water tubes prematurely, and the locomotive was often in the shop. To make matters worse, the poor weight distribution made the locomotive extremely slippery and resulted in poor traction on grades. She was unceremoniously scrapped in 1905 after only 4 years of service.



2020 Denbigh Community Center, Newport News. The purpose of moving the meeting around the division was twofold; (a) to educate others that this division isn't just HO scalers (we are interested in all scales) and give the membership to opportunity to visit other clubs and their layouts. The balance of the year's schedule will be discussed at the Jan 2020 meeting. I'm hopeful the membership will come forward with suggestions to encourage attendees to come and extend our outreach effort within the division.

Some examples to help the thinking process:

- Fewer meetings in the summer due to vacations
- One meeting in the summer held as a social to include family members
- Meetings include layout tours from our members, non-members or clubs
- Meeting held in association with live railroading (railroad facilities, train spotting, etc.)
- Meeting to include location for lunch and social time
- Suggestions on speakers to support meeting location
- Suggestion for hands on clinics with limit business discussed
- One meeting outside of Hampton roads per year

*Fred*

## **BNSF Given Waiver On Wayside Brake Detectors**

BNSF has received a waiver from the FRA to test Wayside Brake detectors. The brake detectors will be tested as trains enter the Belen, NM yard for service. All through trains get a new crew at Belen and also get fueled. Belen makes sense to test the detectors. The way they work is the engineer makes a 10 pound brake pipe reduction and drags the train over the detector at a slow speed. There are two detectors, one that will test the brakes before the application and one that will test them after the application.

With the brakes set on the train on a downhill grade, they will generate heat and the computer checks the temperature of the brakes as they pass with infrared allowing the railroad to tell if there are any problems before the train gets to Belen where the carmen will do an inspection.

## **Minutes of the Tidewater Division Meeting**

**November 16, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 100 at the Children's Museum in Portsmouth VA.

Attendees: 34, no visitors.

Membership: 149 members

Finance: Report given.

Committees:

- Newsletter: Was issued via email and posted on the web site. No issues reported.
- Annual Show: To be discussed at the January Board of Directors meeting and the Division meeting.
- Webmaster: added a section on Master Model Railroaders (MMR). The division has three; Chuck Davis, J.J. Johnson, and Norm Garner. Several members are working toward MMR.
- Club Coordinator: No response from queries sent to various clubs.

Skip Novac provided a presentation on the layout at the Children's Museum, and demonstrated the use of Arduino boards to light buildings.

Business:

- James River Division is hosting the 2022 Mid-East Region Convention in Richmond. Tidewater Division has offered to help. John Fallon is our point of contact.
- Bob Cook, Chuck Davis, Bill Fay, Fred Humphrey, Mark Nieting, and Dale Ridgeway offered to open their layouts and Rich Lloyd offered to open his displayed models for visiting. The plan is to schedule the visits around meetings in the vicinity.
- The white elephant table at the January meeting will have a 10% from total sales will be donated to the Lee Hall station. This will ensure there are no issues with our 501 tax free organization status and collection of Virginia sales tax. The meeting plan will be highlighted in an article in the Callboard and the MER Local. Room is available for table setup. There will be a \$300, \$200, and \$100 door prize in addition to the \$50 credit from our shopping list and a print.

*continued on page 8*



## Did PTC Play A Role In Crash

### No Fatalities In Ohio Derailment

It was the sort of railroad collision that Positive Train Control (PTC) was intended to prevent. At a switch where two tracks on CSX Transportation's line between Toledo, Fostoria, and Columbus converge into one, a train hauling demolition debris and other waste north toward a Fostoria-area landfill ran into the cars of a southbound train laden with sand for use in oil or gas drilling.

The Aug. 12 crash in a field north of Carey caused no serious injuries, and no hazardous materials were involved other than diesel fuel in a wrecked locomotive. But it's getting extra scrutiny from investigators because of how it appears to have happened: the debris train ran past a signal where it was supposed to have stopped and waited for the sand train to pass. And that despite the presence of PTC, which is supposed to prevent just that sort of crash, along with others involving excessive train speed, trains accidentally entering work zones, and misaligned track switches.

"It did occur in an area where PTC was in use, and we're interested in that. We are especially interested in that aspect," said Peter Knudson, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board, which is leading the investigation into a collision that otherwise might have been. Preventing collisions was precisely why Congress passed, and President George W. Bush signed, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 barely a month following a collision near Chatsworth, CA, involving freight and commuter trains in which 25 people were killed. An initial 2015 deadline was extended to 2018, and under certain conditions railroads are allowed until the end of next year to complete full installation and testing.

According to the Association of American Railroads, 91% of route miles required by law to have PTC systems had them in service by July 1. Lines required to have such systems include any main line over which more than 5 million tons of freight or any quantity of hazardous cargo that is poisonous by inhalation moves annually, along with most lines used by passenger trains. Such a system was in use on the line through Carey where the crash occurred. It is designed to apply a train's brakes if, among other things, the engineer does not respond in a timely manner to signals requiring a train to slow down or stop. PTC would not prevent accidents caused by track or equipment failure or collisions with vehicles at road crossings.

A source familiar with the ongoing investigation said the performance of the PTC system, the signals, and the northbound train's crew all are being scrutinized in the crash's wake. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation, said potential factors include the possibility that the PTC system in the northbound train's engine was left in "switching mode," which allows trains to pass red signals at reduced speed subject to approval having been granted by the train dispatcher overseeing the line.

The southbound train's engineer told a Wyandot County Sheriff's deputy who responded to the scene of the pre-dawn collision that he had observed the possibility that the northbound train was improperly entering the area of the track switch and flashed his lights, blew his horn, and tried to call the other train on the railroad's radio system. The northbound train's engineer and conductor, meanwhile, told the deputy they did not know what had happened; the engineer said he only remembered his locomotive rolling onto its side after impact.



- Ethan Vogel and Jim Keiper volunteered to be on the election Committee. Four positions are up for election. Bob Cook is not running again. Fred Humphrey and John Fallon are running again. The superintendent noted that 3 years as Superintendent will earn you a Volunteer Certificate for MMR.
- The November 2019 Model Railroader magazine featured J.J. Johnson's layout.
- Division member Dr. Greg Warth has a website: <https://building-your-model-railroad.com> that contains a wealth of information on model railroading.
- The Division submits an annual report to the region. The report contains a list of officers and committee chairs, meeting times and places, activities from 2019 and planned activities for 2020. As soon as possible but no later than the January meeting, members are asked to forward to Fred any information related to the following:
  - Number of achievement awards given out with a list of who received them and what achievement was reached.
  - What improvements were made to our web site.
  - Did we have any national or regional financial support?
  - Did we hold any clinics outside of the annual show?
  - How many layouts have been visited by our membership this year and did any of those visits happen in another division?
  - How many membership recruitment efforts were undertaken?
  - How many charitable and education activities were provided besides Toys for Tots?
  - Looking for recommendations for future directions that the division may want to direct.
  - Any other items of interest that the membership believes should be added to the annual report.
- There will be a railroad slide show meeting at the Green Acres Presbyterian Church tonight between 7 and 11 PM.
- The Tidewater Big Train Operators is having their holiday train show at White's Nursery and Garden Center in Chesapeake.
- The treasurer received a packet from the IRS containing a 5 year review of our non-profit status.
- The Chesapeake Bay and Western Train Club is holding an open house and white elephant table on November 23, Saturday (10-4) and Sunday (noon-4).
- The next meeting will take place in Lee Hall Station on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The contest will be favorite train. The BOD will meeting in Fred Humphrey's house on 6:30pm January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Model Contest Winners:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – Bob Cook Virginian battleship gondola
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> – Roger Bir Flat car with loads
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Chris Stickney Baggage car
- George Downer won the door prize and Bill Powell won the B&O print.

The meeting adjourned at 1121.

**Bob Cook**

Division Timekeeper

