

## Tidewater Division

# CALLBOARD

Volume 2023, Issue 4

NMRA MEMBER

July 2023

### “Superintendent’s Desk”

**John Robey, Superintendent**

Well, it was greetings from home since I was unable to attend the meeting and you all will thank me. since my wife and I tested positive for COVID after returning from our adventure to the mid-west states! We did do some sightseeing and touring....National Transportation Museum in St. Louis, MO; the Iron Spike Model Railroad Museum in Washington, MO (what a treat); the Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield; Indiana family reunion; CSX Engine Facility in Huntington, WV and finally home to COVID! And this weekend, another family reunion in Lancaster, PA (Strasburg RR & Pennsylvania Train Museum)!

So, matters at hand. We have struggled to find a willing venue that we can schedule for a Train Show/Swap Meet and also fit with some early vendors that expressed an interest in a one-day show. We are

*continued on page 13*

### This Month in Rail History July 2023

July 1, 1967: Rivals Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line merge to form Seaboard Coast Line after 9 years of negotiations and ICC hearings.

July 1, 1982: Norfolk & Western and Southern Railway merge to form Norfolk Southern Railroad.

July 1, 1986: Seaboard System and Chessie System merge to form CSX Transportation corp.

July 2, 1881: President James A. Garfield shot by Charles J. Guiteau, a disappointed office seeker at B&P (Wash DC) station. Garfield dies from blood poisoning September 19, 1881

July 4, 1828: the Baltimore & Ohio railroad lays first stone.

July 6, 1862: U.S. Congress passes the Pacific Railway Act.

July 15, 1853: Grand Trunk Railway (Canada) is formed.

July 29, 1896: First successful electric conduit operation for streetcars in Washington. Only Washington & New York City-Manhattan Island ever adopt this type of operation in the United States. Overhead wires permitted outside city limits (remember we had Washington CITY as well as Washington COUNTY until after the turn of century) necessitating 'plow pits' for changing from conduit to overhead trolley & vice-versa.

### BILL OF LADING – JULY 2023

- 3** NS Heritage – Central Railroad of New Jersey
- 4** Member Photo is cover of Model Railroader Magazine
- 7** More things to know about Amtrak travel
- 9** Freight car geneology
- 12** Officials “thoughts” on car inspections
- 14** July Business Meeting Minutes

“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)

## **Master Model Railroader (MMR) Update**

### **Tidewater Division Members**

**by Chuck Davis**

Most division members are aware of who within Tidewater holds the prestigious “MMR” rating. Currently John Spanagel, John Johnson, Chuck Davis, Norm Garner, Dale Ridgeway and Bob Cook carry the coveted title of MMR. The “Callboard” would like to acknowledge the following member(s) for their most recent MMR Achievements:

Electrical Engineering Achievement Certificate to Bill Wapples

Qualifications for this ranking include choosing seven of the following eleven categories and successfully completing all the requirements. They are: Author, Official, Volunteer, Master Builder-Scenery, Master Builder-Cars, Master Builder-Motive Power, Master Builder-Structures, Master Builder-Prototype Models, Model Railroad Engineer-Civil, Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical and Chief Dispatcher. For more details contact the Achievement Program chairman, Chuck Davis at [chuck-davis@cox.net](mailto:chuck-davis@cox.net)

## **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 July 15, 2023**

July 15, 2023 – the Division Business meeting. The contest is “Trackside Structures.” Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 424 Kings Grant Road, Virginia Beach VA 23452. Coffee and doughnuts, courtesy of the hospitality committee at 9am, meeting starts at 10am.

## **Tidewater Division**

### **Board of Directors**

Superintendent: John Robey  
[jrobey2019@gmail.com](mailto:jrobey2019@gmail.com)

Asst Superintendent: Mark Nieting  
[marknieting@gmail.com](mailto:marknieting@gmail.com)

Bob Cook – Timekeeper  
[Seadevil91@gmail.com](mailto:Seadevil91@gmail.com)

Greg Warth - Paymaster  
[gjwarth@mac.com](mailto:gjwarth@mac.com)

John Fallon – at Large  
[zzoxdoc@yahoo.com](mailto:zzoxdoc@yahoo.com)

John Cryderman – at Large  
[hjcryderman@cox.net](mailto:hjcryderman@cox.net)

Fred Humphrey – at Large  
[fredrickhumphrey@outlook.com](mailto:fredrickhumphrey@outlook.com)

Achievement Program: Chuck Davis  
[chuck-davis@cox.net](mailto:chuck-davis@cox.net)

## Central Railroad of New Jersey

### Forerunner of the popular coach “Streamliner”

The earliest railroad ancestor of the CNJ was the Elizabethtown & Somerville Railroad, incorporated in 1831 and opened from Elizabeth port to Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1836. Horses gave way to steam in 1839, and the railroad was extended west, reaching Somerville at the beginning of 1842. CNJ's influence briefly extended across the Delaware River in the form of the Baltimore & Delaware Bay Railroad, from Bombay Hook, Delaware, east of Townsend, to Chestertown, Maryland. That line became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) family in 1901.

CNJ's lines in Pennsylvania were built by the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company as the Lehigh & Susquehanna Railroad (L&S). The main line was completed between Phillipsburg, New Jersey and Wilkes-Barre in 1866. A notable feature of the line was the Ashley Planes, a steep stretch of line (maximum grade was 14.65%) operated by cables driven by stationary engines, which remained in service until after World War II (WWII). The bulk of the traffic on the Pennsylvania lines was anthracite coal, much of it produced by subsidiaries of the railroad, until the Commodities Clause of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1920 forbade railroads to haul freight in which they had an interest.

In 1929, CNJ inaugurated the *Blue Comet*, a deluxe coach train operating twice daily between Jersey City and Atlantic City. It was painted blue from the pilot of its 4-6-2 to the rear bulkhead of its observation car, and its refurbished cars offered a level of comfort much higher than the usual day coach of the era. The train was the forerunner of the coach streamliners that blossomed nationwide in the late 1930s and the 1940s. Unfortunately, it succumbed to automobile competition in 1941.

The years after WWII were not kind to CNJ. Passenger traffic was almost entirely commuter business, requiring great amounts of rolling stock for two short periods five days a week. Three-fourths of CNJ's freight traffic terminated on line — the railroad was essentially a terminal carrier, which meant little profit was made, if any. In addition, heavy taxes levied by the state of New Jersey ate up much of CNJ's revenue. The state of New Jersey began subsidizing commuter service in 1964, and the tax situation changed in 1967. The merger between the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and Norfolk and Western Railway that was proposed in 1965 to counter the impending PRR-New York Central Railroad merger was to have included CNJ, but the bankruptcy of Penn Central killed that prospect. CNJ drafted elaborate plans for reorganization; they came to naught as neighboring railroads collapsed. Conrail took over the railroad properties and freight operations of the CNJ on April 1, 1976 and it in turn was absorbed by both



### Heritage Engine: SD70ACe

Builder: Electro Motive Division

Truck Type: 6-Wheel

Weight: 408,000 lbs

Horsepower: 4300

Speed: 70 mph

Tractive Effort (starting) 191,000 lbs

Tractive Effort (continuous) 157,000 lbs

Total Length: 74' 03"

Dates: 1992 to Present, +4,000 units



HOW TO **RUN TRAINS WITH PHONES** p.52

MODEL RAILROADING IS FUN!

# Model Railroader

First look:  
**TCS CS 105  
DCC system**  
p. 14



August 2023 • Trains.com

## Enhance your layout

- Build a high-tech transfer table p.40
- Scratchbuild a flatcar p.47
- Create your own white pines p.22
- Make a bevel tool p.44



Dale Ridgeways's  
D. Lee Coal is one of  
four awesome  
Trackside Photos p. 56

**PLUS**

Visit a merger-era coal hauler p.34

Fun and frugal On30 layout p.28

\$7.99

0 71486 01273 3

8 95317 05 10 0



## NS Employee Confident Company “Will Make Things Right”

For years, Scott Wilcox drove a train for the Norfolk Southern, traveling between the Conway Pennsylvania rail yard and Toledo, Ohio. More times than \* care to count," says Wilcox. It's the same route that a Norfolk Southern freight train took until it derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, releasing hazardous chemicals and causing concern for those who lived there. Wilson says he wasn't surprised. "This has been something that's going to happen for a long time" says the licensed locomotive engineer. "And now it happened."

Now retired, Wilcox says he comes from six generations of rail road workers and spent nearly 20 years in the business, much of it with Norfolk Southern. But along the way, Wilcox says things started to change and it worried him. He says, first, Norfolk Southern started increasing the length of the trains.. "They've gone from a mile and a quarter to 2 to 3 miles long" Wilcox says. The problem? It can make the train difficult to handle, especially on curves and hills. At the same time, he says he saw a decrease of safety inspectors who are supposed to inspect the brakes and wheels of every car before it leaves. The result?

"They used to have between five and 8 minutes per car" to do the inspection, he says. "Now it's down to between 30 seconds and a minute per car. There's some of these cars that you'd have a hard time walking the length of them in 30 seconds." Just as alarming, says Wilcox, a train is supposed to be fully inspected every 1000 miles of travel. But he says instead, "mostly what they do is they drive alongside it on one side in the pickup truck." "I've seen that happen Even at night they put a spotlight on the side of the train at night and drive alongside it." In short, says Wilcox, what happened in East Palestine was a logical, almost inevitable outcome. "If the situation doesn't change, if they keep doing things the way they've done in the past, you're going to see more of these."

During a recent congressional hearing, Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw was grilled about an internal company memo allowing inspectors only 30 seconds to inspect a rail car. "I'm not familiar with a minimum or maximum for rail car inspection duration," said Shaw. Senator Maria Cantwell, (D) Washington, snapped back: "We're not going to keep letting people put money in the bank and think that you can short change safety."

Under continued intense questioning, Shaw committed his company to providing additional training for employees, advanced warning notifications, and phasing out the use of older, weaker tanker cars that are often used to haul hazardous chemicals. Shaw said, "We strive to make our safety culture the best in the industry."

Wilcox also had positive comments about his former employer. He says that in his experience Norfolk Southern always did an excellent job of remediating any accident site. He says he's confident that the company will make things right for the folks of East Palestine and any other communities impacted by the derailment.







Participants of Union Pacific's Contractor Tank Car Safety Course received hands-on experience during a scenario that closely resembled a real-world incident.

WALTHERS IMPORT MOTORS  
KIT  
NOW AVAILABLE FOR \$10  
EACH



DIVISION NOVEMBER  
CONTEST



**“C&NW Conductor injured from assault by hobo”**

OELWEIN DAILY REGISTER, Oelwein, Iowa, June 30, 1926

Jim Royal, hobo, is being held in the county jail here charged with assault upon Conductor A. W. Tomas, Boone, Iowa, of the Chicago & North Western Railroad. Royal was captured by a posse after a 12-hour hunt. He is alleged to have thrown a large rock which struck Thomas on the head when the latter refused to let him ride on the train.

Thomas is recovering in a Boone hospital from injuries. Royal was bound over to the grand jury.

# More Things to Know About Amtrak Trains for First Time Travelers

By Reena Jain

**The Amtrak App:** The Amtrak app makes it simple for travelers to plan and reserve their trips, check Amtrak schedules and destinations, and receive real-time alerts for delays or changes. Users can access their e-tickets through the app, which provides information on Amtrak train routes and prices. Additionally, the app includes interactive maps that help passengers track the whereabouts of the train and get knowledge of the schedule. The Amtrak app has a user-friendly interface and convenient features, making train travel more simple, reliable, and enjoyable.



**Expect Train Delays:** Amtrak trains need to stop at some places to let large freight trains pass because they share the same tracks. It can result in unforeseen delays in travel times, especially on longer, cross-country routes. For instance, the California Zephyr from Chicago to Denver may need to stop before the Moffat Tunnel to allow a freight train to pass, delaying Amtrak schedules. Therefore, researching Amtrak schedules and destinations is beneficial before making travel plans.

**Making A Pre-Departure Checklist Is Helpful:** Passengers will require a number of items, including those necessary and desirable for a stress-free and memorable Amtrak trip. Some of these—like an ID—are necessary, while others are worthwhile for an enjoyable Amtrak journey.

**Identification:** Passengers must have a photo ID or passport with them.

**Train Tickets:** Passengers should have hard copies of their tickets or electronic copies of their tickets on hand.

**Travel insurance:** It's essential to protect oneself from unanticipated travel mishaps.

**Medication:** Passengers who will need to take any medication while traveling must bring it with them.

**Other Essentials:** Personal care items, snacks, beverages, books, and some forms of entertainment are desirable (but not necessary) for a comfortable trip, particularly on long Amtrak routes.

**Stations Have Different Stopover Times:** The train makes scheduled stops at various stations during a trip, and the stopover time varies depending on the type of station. If a station is a rest stop, the stopover time is comparatively longer than that of a passenger drop-off and pick-up location. Knowing if a specific stop is a designated rest stop where passengers are permitted to disembark is preferable for those who want to smoke because smoking is not permitted on the train or simply want to move around the station.

**Reasonable Ticket Prices:** Amtrak tickets are reasonably priced! The average price of a ticket from New York to Atlantic City is about \$94 (although Amtrak's famous roomettes typically cost much more). It is pretty budget-friendly compared to any airline fare on the same route, and it is not even the lowest price out there. The cheapest tickets on this Amtrak route can even be found for only \$82. The best thing is to avoid rush hour and book your Amtrak tickets well in advance. Plus, a cool tip: Amtrak offers saver fares on each route, where passengers can save up to 20% compared to the standard Coach fare when booked at least 7 days in advance. Furthermore, Amtrak fares for seniors (aged 65 and up) are 10% less than the standard fare on most trains in the United States, and seniors (aged 60 and up) pay 10% less for cross-border services operated by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada.

**Plenty Dining Choices:** Amtrak offers many dining choices to its customers. There is something tasty and appetizing for every passenger, from adults to kids. Some of these main options include:



# “Around the Bend”

Member Photos (photos by Mark Nieting)





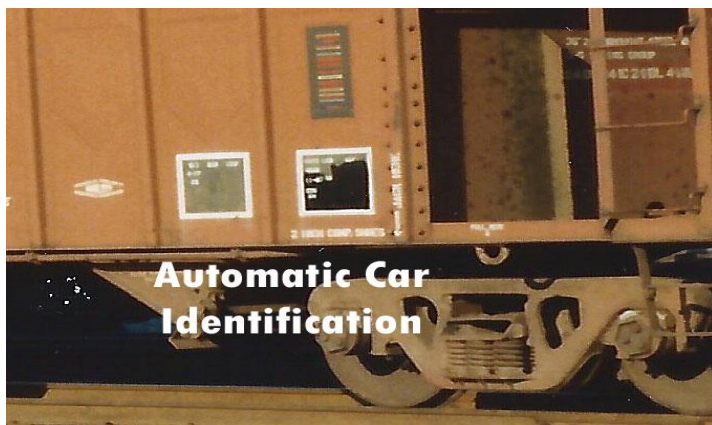
# Freight Car “Genealogy”.....How Old is That Box Car?

By Paul Mirick

(This article appeared in the July 2015 CB&W newsletter “the Consist”)

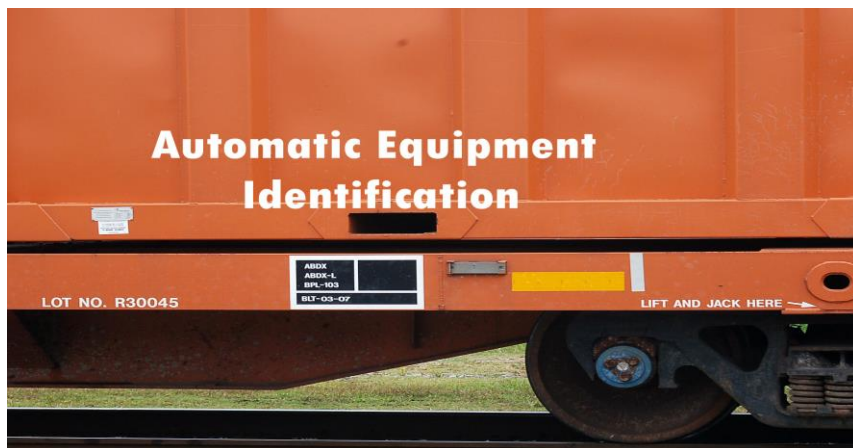
Last month I discussed the timeline for changes in the COTS label on freight cars and how it relates to era you may be modeling. This month I will discuss some other spotting features that could be used for dating a freight car. Once again my primary reference for this information is Detailing Freight Cars by Jeff Wilson which is published by Kalmbach Books (Model Railroader). If you are into detailing freight cars I would recommend that you get a copy of this book.

An easy feature to spot on box cars, reefers, and stock cars is the running board. I always call them roof walks but Mr. Wilson points out the proper name is running board. Early running boards were made of wood but in 1945 new cars were required to have steel running boards. Things changed again in the 60’s and all cars built after 1966 couldn’t have running boards unless required for access to hatches on the roof (covered hoppers and tank cars). The original deadline was to have all running boards removed by 1974 but this was later changed to 1979. So if you are modeling after 1979 – no roof walks.



Another spotting feature of the railroad freight cars of the late 60’s and the 70’s is the Automatic Car Identification (ACI) labels. The ACI system used a trackside scanner to read plates with multi-colored horizontal bands on each car (see photo). There were a total of 13 bands which were composed of colored stripes in blue, black, red, or a black & white checkerboard pattern. The pattern would define the car owner and number. The bars were inside a large black rectangle. The system was first introduced in 1967 and was required to be on all cars in interchange service by 1970. Unfortunately the system never reached its full potential for several reasons.

First, the tags were easily obscured by dirt and grime. The labels also frequently fell off from improper application or were burned off from hot loads (gondolas in hot steel service) or car heaters (hoppers.) Because of these problems the system was only 70 to 80% accurate which was unacceptable for tracking of cars and therefore the system was no longer required after 1977. If you are modeling the 70’s most of your cars should have the ACI label. For modelers doing 80’s your cars which would have been built in late 60’s and up to 77 could have the ACI labels. ACI labels are available



from Microscale (Set #MC-4280). After several years of development and testing a new system for car identification was developed and implemented in 1992. The system called Automatic Equipment Identification (AEI) uses a small electronic reader. Unlike the ACI system this does not have the problems with dirt and grime. Photo shows and AEI tag on freight car. I do not know if any of the aftermarket detail parts makers have an AEI tag and could not find a decal to simulate them. Most of the newer models have them modeled in their mold.

The final spotting feature I would like to discuss this month was used for a very limited time is the U1 inspection stencil (or wheel dot). These were first used in March of 1978. There had been defective 33 inch wheels on 70 ton or less freight cars that had caused accidents. As a result of these accidents an inspection of wheels was implemented.

*continued on page 16*

## **Rail Gossip...Seen & Heard**

Reps. Bill Johnson (R-Ohio) and Emilia Strong Sykes (D-Ohio) introduced the oddly named RAIL (Rail Accidents in Locomotives) Act in the House of Representatives. The bill, similar to the Railway Safety Act introduced earlier in March by Senators Sherrod Brown (D- Ohio) and J.D. Vance (R- Ohio), does not contain a provision for legislated crew size requiring a two-person crew aboard every train.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is sidelining the King of Prussia Rail Project, citing its "further review of rising costs, which have been exacerbated by inflation and high interest rates." This follows the transit authority's approval last month of a final-design contract.

MxV Rail announced March 20 that registration is now open for the 28th Annual Association of American Railroads (AAR) Research Review, which will take place in Pueblo, Colo., June 26-28, 2023, bringing together MxV Rail experts, leaders from Class I and short line railroads, university students, and suppliers from around the world.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), on released a safety advisory, which it said was to "re-emphasize previously raised concerns about the survivability of DOT-111 tank cars and encourage tank car owners and shippers of flammable liquids to voluntarily upgrade their tank car fleets to the newest, and safest, available tank car design authorized for flammable liquid service—the DOT-117 specification tank car."

CSX is taking the "rail customer experience to the next level" by installing GPS tags on its railcars and containers to provide up-to-the-minute location information anywhere on its 20,000-mile network, the Class I announced via a Twitter post.

Amtrak's New York City-Montreal Adirondack train, the only Amtrak service that was discontinued because of the COVID virus and has not returned yet, is coming back, reports Contributing Editor David Peter Alan. Its first northbound run from Penn Station New York will take place April 3.

Colorado's Regional Transportation District has announced two light rail maintenance projects to support the safe operation of the E, H, and R lines between I-25/Broadway Station in Denver and Lincoln Station in Lone Tree.

The contracting group that built three commuter rail lines for the Regional Transportation District appealed a court verdict that had denied its request for the transit agency to cover almost \$112 million in unforeseen costs.

Two people found dead Friday in a railroad car in south Texas were Honduran men, the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security said, indicating it was investigating the case as possible human smuggling.

Union Pacific has become the second major freight railroad in the past week to back away from the industry's longstanding effort to cut train crews down to one person. Norfolk Southern made a similar announcement several days earlier. UP vice-president Seth Whited said the railroad will now focus on other ways to address the concerns about demanding schedules that workers expressed during last fall's difficult contract negotiations.

Emergency teams are working to secure 10 barges that broke loose from a tugboat on the Ohio River along the waterfront in Louisville, Ky., including a barge carrying some 1,400 metric tons of methanol that is partially submerged. It's one of three wayward barges that have wedged themselves next to a dam near a power station.

Sens. John Fetterman (D-Pa.), Bob Casey (D-Pa.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) have added a fourth railroad safety bill to three currently circulating on Capitol Hill by introducing on March 30 one they claim will "further expand rail safety requirements in the wake of the East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment," according to a report in The Hill.



## Take an Amtrak Trip

Slow travel is all the rage these days, and for train enthusiasts in the United States, that can mean riding on Amtrak across the country. While Amtrak has all sorts of seating arrangements — from coach and business class seats to full bedrooms on sleeper cars — there's one form of train transportation that's far more exclusive than the rest: a 100% private rail car. No, we don't mean chartering your own Amtrak train. (Though you can actually do that, too.) We mean taking a rail car that you personally own and attaching it to an Amtrak train. "Amtrak offers the ability for people to attach their privately owned rail cars to our trains for travel to destinations on the Amtrak system to see North America in an extraordinary way," an Amtrak spokesperson told *Travel + Leisure*.

It might be true that fairly few people own private rail cars. But there are, however, an American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners and a Railroad Passenger Car Alliance, which goes to show that owners are out there. And for those individuals, Amtrak's service is one of the best ways to travel significant distances. Amtrak also offers additional services, from short-term and long-term rail car parking to car washes.

If you don't have your own rail car, it's possible to buy one but be prepared to set a pretty high budget. Fully restored vintage rail cars can cost \$500,000 to \$1 million, easily. Even DIY projects cost six figures — plus the cost to fix them up. On top of that, you'll also have to pay Amtrak for the tow. Rates start at \$4.09 per mile, and that doesn't include a slew of fees.

And if that's a little out of your budget, don't worry. You can always plunk down in a traditional Amtrak window seat and take in the views all the same.



## Railroad Lingo

**BIG E** - Engineer, so called from the large initial on membership buttons of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

**DINKY** - Switch engine without tender, used around back shop and roundhouse, or any small locomotive. Also a four-wheel trolley car

**GREEN EYE** - Clear signal. (At the time Cy Warman wrote his celebrated poem, "I Hope the Lights Are White," the clear signal was white and green meant caution. This was changed years ago because of the fact that when a red or green signal lens broke or fell out it exposed a white, thus giving a *clear board* to engineers even though the signal itself was set to stop or go slow)

**JOINT** - A length of rail, generally 33 or 39 feet. *Riding to a joint* is bringing cars together so that they couple.

**LINER** - Passenger train

## Former BN Official Thoughts on “Car Inspections”

Too much is being made of the one minute (which is the average per car, in an arriving train or interchange cut, which is when the most thorough inspection is made, since outbound trains are normally made up of cars that have had an inbound inspection and the primary object is piston travel on an air set.) I have walked many trains with car inspectors, both in my role as chairman of the BN Derailment Analysis Committee (when in 1978 we had a particular emphasis on quality of inspections as a derailment prevention measure) and in 1969 on the CB&Q when we were installing the car grading system, we used for our Car Order Matching program. In 1969, but to some extent still in 1978, there were still brass bearings with cotton waste packing or lube pads, and this took more time than with roller bearings, including passing the packing hook gently along each journal to detect grooves.



Even in 1969 the average on the CB&Q at Cicero was a minute a car, and nothing was being shorted. These are team inspections with a man on each side, the normal practice in either receiving or departure yards. On most cars the inspectors can see at a glance defect in the coupler assembly, spring nest, whether there is a flange wear issue, brake-rigging, on hopper cars bottom gate issues, etc.

When something is going to take a closer look, the time for that car will be above average (for example, to apply a wheel gauge) and where needed, to make out and apply a bad order tag. The average, however, is going to be a minute unless for some reason this particular train or cut has an unusually high ratio of problems. This can occur if cars are in a service where they rarely pass through a major yard inspection.



I ran into this once when I was wondering about the high level of AAR Billing on the Pend O'Reille Valley Railroad during an inspection visit BN had me make there in my consulting role. It turned out that there was a particular recycled paper service that wasn't being seen in a major yard and cars would turn up on the POVA with such things as excessively worn coupler carrier irons—their billing was legitimate. This is not to say that there aren't yards where the quality of inspection isn't up to snuff-- we were surprised to find cars in outbound trains at Northtown in 1978 (Minneapolis) with multiple broken springs in a nest, and that was the kind of thing our audits were seeking to prevent. I can tell you there was a mighty red-faced car foreman when we had him with us on that audit.

But overall, in the months we did these audits over the entire system, we rarely found such issues. Remember, the FRA in the US, and I presume the BOT in Canada, do the equivalent of these surprise audits regularly, and NS would only stand out if the FRA says they are having an unusual proportion of red tags, or if through some economy in Government, those FRA inspections aren't being done with the frequency I recall in my active days. Also, the numbers of derailments nationally being headlined don't distinguish between one-car yard derailments caused by a split switch, and something on the scale of East Palestine.





## Engineers frustrated with lack of sick time! Other RR's give sick time

Engineers remain frustrated with the lack of paid sick time and the demands railroads like BNSF are making in negotiations despite the deals that have been made this year for most of the other rail unions. The lack of sick time and other quality of life concerns about the demanding schedules train crews work took center stage in the negotiations last fall that reached the brink of a strike before Congress stepped in and blocked a walkout. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen union says the railroads are still asking for too much in return for sick time instead of just providing the basic benefit it believes workers are entitled to. "They want to take the money out of our pocket somewhere else and give it back to us in the form of sick time," said Rob Cunningham, one of the BLET's general chairmen who is leading the negotiations with BNSF.



The BLET's frustrations generally extend to all the major freight railroads, but Cunningham said BNSF seemed to be acting especially "hard headed" in talks last week. "You would think with something as easy as paid sick time, he could just say: 'Do it. We need to do this. This is the right thing to do,'" Cunningham said about Buffett, who is also a major philanthropist. "But clearly he doesn't practice what he preaches," Cunningham said. BNSF spokesperson Lena Kent said the railroad has already reached deals to provide sick leave to more than 6,000 of its employees at eight of its unions, and "it is our intention to ultimately have agreements in place covering our entire scheduled workforce."

Across the industry, CSX has led the way by reaching agreements with most of its unions on sick time. Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific have also announced several sick time deals. Most of these deals provide workers with 4 days of paid sick time and give them the option to convert 3 leave days into sick time to give workers a total of seven sick days a year. "CSX is determined to ensure that all employees feel valued, respected, appreciated and operate as one team," spokeswoman Sheriee Bowman said. Most of those other deals that have been announced focus on smaller unions that do maintenance and repair work along the rails and generally have more regular schedules.



One of the key remaining concerns for the BLET is that even where the railroads seem willing to give engineers sick time, the railroads generally still want to hold workers accountable for missing work under their strict attendance policies. So even if workers do get sick time, they may not feel free to use it because they would still be penalized for missing work although CSX has said it won't punish workers for taking sick time. "We're going to have locomotive engineers and conductors making a choice of whether to work sick and handle some of the most dangerous items that any transportation group handles, but they're going to work sick or be subject to attendance policies," said Mark Wallace, BLET's second-highest official. U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders who has been pressuring the railroads to give their workers sick time and tried unsuccessfully to require it when Congress was voting on the contract in December said he has been encouraged by the progress the industry has made so far. But more needs to be done, and without concessions, the Vermont independent said. The deal SMART-TD reached with Norfolk Southern last week tries to ensure conductors will know their days off in advance. Norfolk Southern spokesman Thomas Crosson said those new rules should help because conductors will generally work six days in a row followed by two days off, and each week's schedule will be more predictable.

**MINUTES  
TIDEWATER DIVISION MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
JULY 15, 2023**

**Members Present: 16**

CALLED TO ORDER: 10:00 AM BY MARK NIETING, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT (in John Robey's absence due to illness).

NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS: NONE

PAYMASTER REPORT: Given and accepted.

TIMEKEEPER COMMENTS: NONE

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Total of 111 MEMBERS (Many are not active for various reasons - traveling distance, etc. They remain members of the NMRA but are not active in the Division.)

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM: NO NEW AWARDS (Reminder to get paperwork submitted for those who have completed projects)

**SUPERINTENDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- NMRA INTERCHANGE PROGRAM – An attempt by National to improve communications among members, but signup is complicated. Most people probably won't do it.
- MER Convention in Altoona Oct 19-22. Gary Brown, VP of MER, explained that there have been problems with using PayPal online to pay for Registration. They are trying to fix these problems as fast as possible.
- [Tidewater@Groups.io](mailto:Tidewater@Groups.io) – Reminder to use this to spread information to all or most members. Add interesting links, messages, or photos to send to the rest of us.
- MER – VP Gary Brown discussed "Orphans Project" – trying to get modelers from the three Divisions that folded to join other divisions close by or create their own Division.
- Bob Cook is planning to do a clinic on 3D Printing at the next meeting in September.
- NMRA BOXCAR BODIES AVAILABLE FOR FREE on the NMRA website: After painting, these can be used for decal and weathering clinics.

SLIDE SHOW GROUP: This has been successful and will continue as long as members continue to show up for it after each business meeting. A slide show has been scheduled after this meeting.

MODULAR HO CLUB: John Fallon and John Cryderman are the only active members right now, but they travel to train shows regularly. They are currently at a show near Natural Bridge in Virginia.

RAFFLE AND 50/50: Multiple items were raffled off. There were several winners. The 50/50 drawing was won by Fred Humphrey.

CONTEST AWARDS: "TRACKSIDE STRUCTURES". There were two entries – George Downer won First Place for his icehouse diorama. Pat Mahoney won 2<sup>nd</sup> Place for his coal tipple and steam train. The next contest in September will be on the "super detailed passenger car."

DIVISION TRAIN SHOWS: *NOTHING CONFIRMED YET.*

- OPEN HOUSE AT VB CENTRAL LIBRARY: Not going to happen on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> as originally planned. Still working on whether we will have a display any time in November or not.
- THANKSGIVING WEEKEND SHOW AT "PLANES, TRAINS AND SANTA": If permitted, we will have a table there to promote our Division.

*Continued on page 16*



# Round the Curve to Altoona 2023

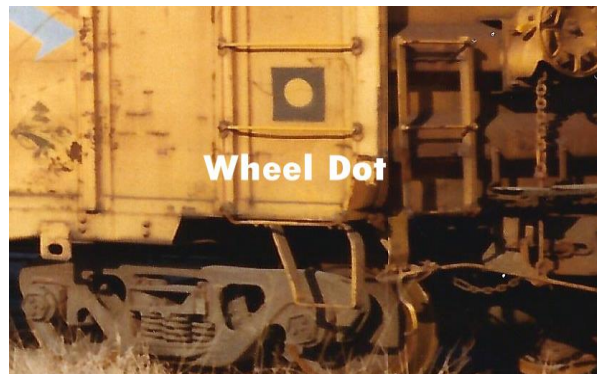
Mid-Eastern Region Convention  
October 19-22, 2023  
Altoona Grand Hotel  
Hosted by the Susquehanna Division 11





Cars that were found to have defective wheels were stenciled with a black square with a white dot. Cars with acceptable wheels were stenciled with a black square with a yellow dot. All cars with defective wheels had to be taken out of service by December 31, 1978. Cars built with 33 inch wheels in 79 and 80 had the yellow dots applied but after that they were no longer not required. There was no requirement to remove the dots so they were seen on freight cars for many years. Microscale set MC-5012 has the wheel dot symbol.

Hope this information is of use to some of you. Happy modeling.



## Mexican Railroad

(Pictures by Lyle Stoneburner)



#5818 is an EMD export G12 locomotive.



One of the narrow gauge wooden coaches.



A 2-8-0 narrow gauge steam locomotive #143 on display between the rail yards and town.



- SEPTEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> SHOW: May not happen because there are no available facilities for us to use. Will try St. Matthews again.
- Currently, the only thing we can count on is the regularly scheduled Division meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> at Prince of Peace.
- We will notify the membership if and/or when we are able to host or participate in any train shows this year.

OTHER TRAIN SHOWS: (Non-Division):

- NANSEMOND ACADEMY IS HOSTING A SHOW ON AUG. 5. Will be presented by Old Train Collectors of Virginia.
- MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM OF HR: Train display for children will be shown at Pope Pius Church on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> (morning only) Santa will be there!
- CB&W 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY: Open House – July 22-23. Grafton, VA

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE MER CONVENTION IN 2026: Tabled for now.

MEMBERS IN THE ROUND: All members were asked to tell how they first got into model railroading, what they liked best about the hobby, and what was on their workbench right now.

REQUEST: Please take photos of what you are working on – models, layouts, etc. and bring them in for "Show and Tell."

The meeting was then adjourned around 12:00 Noon.

SLIDE SHOW: Was held after the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregory J. Warth  
Paymaster

also working on trying to arrange a one-day "open house" type event showcasing the model railroading hobby, during the month of November (National Model Railroading Month). I will send out a special email outlining the entire event, once (and if) we secure a facility and date. September's contest is a highly detailed or unique passenger car that you have built, modified or detailed. And of course, the highly anticipated diorama contest in November that features the Walther's Import Motors kit or kits! One last note is a reminder that the CB&W Club is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year this coming weekend (Saturday and Sunday 7/22-23) with an open house. If you can make it, it is a layout worth your time to view.

Stay on track and enjoy the hobby.

*John*

Tidewater, Superintendent

## **Missouri Trucker Dies in Norfolk Southern Train Collision**

The Missouri State Highway Patrol reported that one person is dead after a train derailment Sunday afternoon between Madison, Mo. and Holliday Mo.

MSHP troopers said that the semi failed to stop at the railroad crossing and struck the train, leaving the driver of the semi dead.

A MSHP crash report identified the semi driver as Russell W. Minnis, 65, of Higbee, Mo. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 3:30 p.m.



## **Ode to Aging...from a Railroader Perspective** **by Rocky Myrtle**

The last couple of years I have tried to ignore the fact that I am getting older. I try to convince myself everything is the same. But the fact is I am failing badly on both counts. All the hard labor in the 70s and 80s has caught up with me. The 38 years I put in crept up on me over time.

Every week I see a post where we have lost another brother railroader. Sneaking up on 76 I know there is not a lot of years left.

My mind and my body are out of synch. My mind still thinks I can do the things of my youth. My body quickly reminds me of something different. The labor intense jobs I do tackle now are done in short shifts. It makes me mad thinking of the things I used to do and no longer can do. The littlest of tasks I tackle have me sucking for air.

Many days Tylenol is my best friend to get through the day. Most evenings the TV is going and I'm sound asleep in my chair.

Muscles I never knew I had in my youth let me know where they are when I crawl in bed. The sleep that comes so easy in my recliner seems to evade me once in bed. My dresser is covered with the bottles of pills I take every day. Many days are spent in doctors' offices.

But life is great at this stage of life. Having the freedom to do what we want to do is good. Life without punching into a clock or being tied down to a phone is good. None of us know how many days we have, but we can enjoy the time we do have left.

