

Tidewater Division

CALLBOARD

NMRA MEMBER

March 2024

“Superintendent’s Desk”

John Robey, Superintendent

Well, looks like spring is finally here and we can shake off the winter cold. We have published the meeting contests for the year and have challenged you to plan, build and enter your favorite entry! The March meeting was sparsely attended with just 17 members out of 117 attending, while those attending participated in an excellent clinic on decaling by Mark Nieting. I had commented and explained the re-instatement of our corporate standing with the Virginia State Corporation Commission to put us back in appropriate authority.

So, a couple comments about the NMRA issues. The headquarters element has sent out an on-line member survey to gather information from you as a member to assist in guiding and developing programs to benefit the membership and administration of the national organization. This survey is really worth your time to take a minute and complete. I encourage you to do so. Next item I want to comment on. The matter of the

continued on page 16

BILL OF LADING – MARCH 2024

- 3** “Around the Bend” Member Photos & Awards
- 3** March Division Meeting Minutes
- 4** Death of a Railroad Legend
- 10** Amended January 2024 Minutes
- 13** Union Pacific Invests in World Class Safety
- 14** Model Railroad Museums “Fulfilling a Dream”

This Month in Rail History March 2024

March 1, 1918: Congress passes the Standard Time Act.

March 2, 1846: the Hillsboro and Cincinnati Railroad is incorporated.

On 4 March 1872, the first long-distance rail line in the U.S. was opened between Omaha and the Council Bluffs in Iowa

March 14, 1914: US Congress agrees to fund construction and operation of a railroad from Seward to Fairbanks Alaska.

March 16, 1957: Milwaukee Road has their final steam locomotive. (Mark N. did you know that?)

March 19, 1886: Great Southwest Railroad Strike was a labor union strike against the Union Pacific and Missouri Pacific RR’s.

March 19, 1920: U.S. Government privatizes all railroads after WWI.

March 28, 1884: This Date in Los Angeles Transportation History the Sixth Street and San Fernando Street Railroad Company, and the East Los Angeles and Main Street Railroad Company are both deeded to the Central Railway Company.

March 28, 1887: The Pomona Street Railroad Company (California) is incorporated.

“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

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:

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

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 for details.

Division Mtg & Contest May 18, 2024

May 18, 2024 – the Division Business meeting. The contest: Detailed Loads. 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

Assistant Superintendent - John Fallon
zzoxdoc@yahoo.com

Timekeeper – Pat Mahoney
patmahoney356@gmail.com

Paymaster – Fred Humphrey
fredrickhumphrey@outlook.com

Member at Large - Chuck Davis
chuck-davis@cox.net

Member at Large – Wayne Williams
Astroboy23222@yahoo.com

Member at Large – Bill Fay
gpsfay@aol.com

Achievement Program - Chuck Davis
chuck-davis@cox.net

“Around the Bend” Tidewater Member Photos & Awards



Dr. Greg Warth’s Z-Scale Diorama. A display in excellence.



Minutes of the NMRA/MER Tidewater Division Business Meeting 23 March 2024

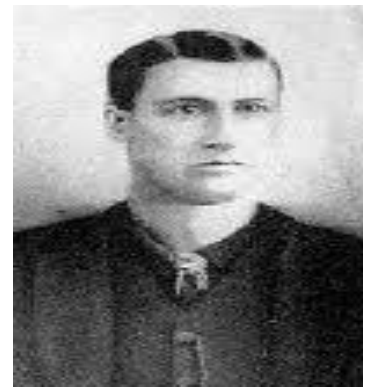
1. The March Business Meeting was held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on Kings Grant Road in Virginia Beach, VA. Superintendent John Robey called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.
2. Paymaster Fred Humphrey reported the status of Division accounts including savings, checking, and cash on hand.
3. Timekeeper Pat Mahoney reported that Division membership is currently at 117 members.
4. Superintendent John Robey reported that the Division Annual Report was submitted to the Mid-Eastern Region, and that the Division reinstatement report was submitted to the Virginia State Corporation Commission, and the Division was reinstated by the Commission on February 20, 2024
5. Division members are reminded that they must keep their contact information current. Failure to do that results in not receiving the Callboard newsletter, MER newsletter, meeting schedules, contest information, and special announcements.
6. Superintendent Robey reviewed Division contest rules and explained that there will be more attention to details, such as blocking and securing loads. He suggested that photos of prototypes would be helpful.

continued on page 9

Death of a Railroad Legend

Engineer John Luther Jones

Jonathan Luther Jones was born on March 14, 1863, in Jackson Tennessee. As a young boy, his parents moved from Jackson to Cayce Kentucky, where he acquired the nickname of "Cayce" which he chose to spell as "Casey." Jones went to work for the Mobile & Ohio RR and performed well and was promoted to brakeman. In the summer of 1887 a yellow fever epidemic struck many train crews on the neighboring Illinois Central Railroad, providing an unexpected opportunity for faster promotion of firemen on that line. He was finally promoted to engineer, his lifelong goal, on February 23, 1891



Jones was also famous for his peculiar skill with the train whistle. His whistle was made of six thin tubes bound together, the shortest being half the length of the longest. Its unique sound involved a long-drawn-out note that began softly, rose and then died away to a whisper, a sound that became his trademark. The sound of it was variously described as "a sort of whippoorwill call," or "like the war cry of a Viking"

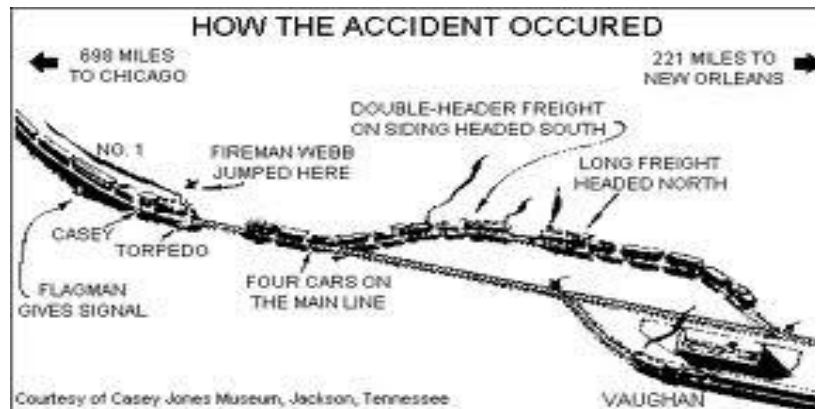
Jones was issued nine citations for rules infractions in his career, with a total of 145 days suspended. However, in the year prior to his death Jones had not been cited for any rule's infractions. Railroaders who worked with Jones liked him but admitted that he was a bit of a chance taker. Unofficially though, the penalties were far more severe for running behind than breaking the rules. He was by all accounts an ambitious engineer, eager to move up the seniority ranks and serve on the better-paying, more prestigious passenger trains.



On April 29, 1900, Jones was at Poplar Street Station in Memphis having driven the No. 2 from Canton. Normally, Jones would have stayed in Memphis on a layover; however, he was asked to take the No. 1 back to Canton, as the scheduled engineer had called in sick with cramps. Jones loved challenges and was determined to "get her there on the advertised" time no matter how difficult it looked. Although it was raining, steam trains of that era operated best in damp conditions. However, the weather was quite foggy that night (which reduced visibility), and the run was well known for its tricky curves.

Nevertheless, due to the delays with the change in engineers, the No. 1 did not leave Memphis until 12:50 am, 95 minutes behind schedule. By the time he got to Durant (155 miles into the run) Jones was almost on time. He was quite happy, saying at one point to fireman Simeon Webb "the old girls got her dancing slippers on tonight" as he leaned on the Johnson Bar. Unbeknown to Jones, three separate trains were vying for rail and siding space at Vaughan with at least four freight cars overlapping the main line. Meanwhile, Jones was almost back on schedule, running at about 75 mph and unaware of the danger ahead, since he was traveling through a 1.5-mile left-hand curve that blocked his view. Webb yelled, "theres something on the main line," to which Jones yelled, "jump Sim

jump!" Jones reversed the throttle and slammed the airbrakes into emergency stop, but the engine quickly plowed through a wooden caboose, a car load of hay, another of corn and half way through a car of timber before leaving the track. He had amazingly reduced his speed from about 75 miles per hour to about 35 miles per hour when he impacted with deafening crunch of steel against steel and splintering wood. Because Casey Jones stayed on board to slow the train, he doubt saved



continued on page 5

the passengers from serious injury and death (Jones himself was the only fatality of the collision). His watch stopped at the time of impact: 3:52 AM on April 30, 1900. Popular legend holds that when his body was pulled from the wreckage of his train near the twisted rail, his hands still clutched the whistle cord and brake.

The final I.C. accident report was released on July 13, 1900, by A.S. Sullivan, General Superintendent of the I.C., and stated that "Engineer Jones was solely responsible having disregarded the signals given by Flagman Newberry." John M. Newberry was the flagman on the southbound No. 83 that Jones hit. According to the report he had gone back a distance of 3,000 feet where he had placed torpedoes on the rail. He then continued north a further distance of 500 to 800 feet, where he stood and gave signals to Jones's train No.1.

But doubt still lingers about the official findings and some wonder where Newberry was positioned that night. Some feel he wasn't there at all. Some say Jones was "short flagged," but Newberry was an experienced man and he had flagged No. 25 a short time before. In the report Fireman Sim Webb states that he heard the torpedo explode, then went to the gangway on the engineer's side and saw the flagman with the red and white lights standing alongside the tracks. Going then to the fireman's side, he saw the markers of the cabooses of No. 83 and yelled to Jones. But it would have been impossible for him to have seen the flagman if the flagman had been positioned 500–800 feet before the torpedoes as the report says he was. Once the torpedoes exploded the train would have already been too far past the flagman's reported position for him to be visible.



(Simeon Webb circa 1936)

So, if Webb did see the flagman at this point, he had to be out of position at about 3,000 feet north of the switch, not 3,500–3,800 feet north as stated in the report, which means Jones was indeed "short flagged." It's possible that after the flagman flagged the No. 25 freight through, he heard the commotion as No. 72's air hose broke and everything got jammed up with No. 83 fouling the main line. He may have gone to No. 83 to find out what the situation was, assuming he had time before Jones arrived. He then headed north along the tracks and placed the torpedoes, but by then Jones may have come roaring out of the fog before he made it to his reported position. If this is what happened, Jones lost a good 500–800 feet of stopping distance, which might have prevented the collision. In any event, some railroad historians have disputed the official account over the years, finding it difficult if not impossible to believe that an engineer of Jones's experience would have ignored a flagman, fusee (flares) and torpedoes exploding on the rail to alert him to danger.

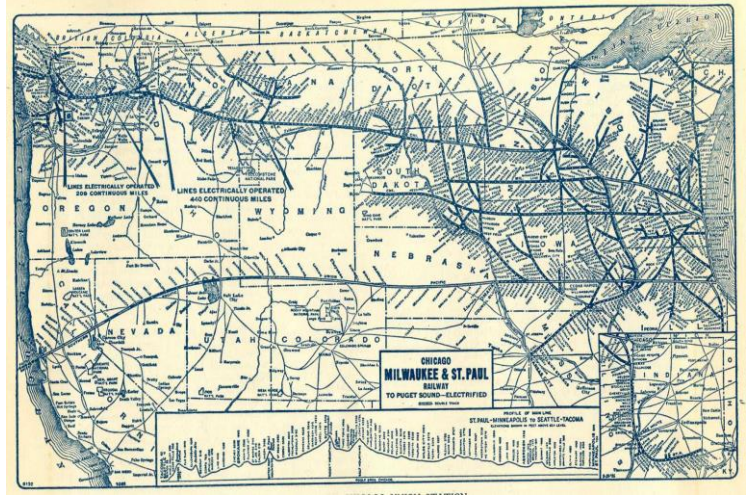
Contrary to what the report claimed, shortly after the accident and until his death (in 1957) Simeon Webb maintained that "we saw no flagman or fusee's, we heard no torpedoes. Without any warning we plowed into that caboose."

In a closing note, those members who are considered "baby boomers" are likely to remember the TV show from the 1957-58 season "Casey Jones" starring Alan Hale Jr. in the title role and Hollywood veteran Dub Taylor as fireman "Wallie" Webb. Don't recognize the star? Well after the Jones series ended, Alan Hale Jr. moved from being a train engineer to skipper of his own yacht in "Gilligan's Island."



The longest abandoned railroad in the US

Today there are numerous abandoned railroads all over the U.S. but the longest and most famous of which is arguably Milwaukee Road's Pacific Extension. It was a mammoth undertaking for the railroad to build a railroad all the way from Chicago over the transcontinental divide over the Rocky and Cascade mountains to the sea terminating at Seattle. The full name for the Milwaukee Road was "Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad." It was a Class I railroad that once ran from 1847 to 1986. The Pacific Extension was built between 1906 and 1909. It was one of the last of the great transcontinental railroads to be built in the United States (the first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869). The project was the result of the railroad's directors thinking in the 1890's that they needed to build



a route to the Pacific to continue to be competitive with other railroads. It was a very costly endeavor. The fact that it took only three years to complete is a remarkable testament to contemporary engineering. At one stage, some 656 miles of its tracks were electrified - making it the longest electrified railroad in America.

Abandonment of the Pacific Extension & fate of the railroad today ... While the route was one of the most direct possible, the wisdom of the route has been questioned in that it bypassed some of the main population centers. It ran through parts of the country with little local passenger potential. After years of financial difficulty, the Pacific Extension of Milwaukee Road was abandoned in 1984 (the rest of the railroad was merged into the Soo Line Railroad). The prolonged years of financial difficulty had the feedback loop problem of having less money to maintain the railroad, causing it to deteriorate.

The Pacific Extension ran through Montana, Idaho, and Washington. Some stretches of the railroad remain in use, but adding together the abandoned sections, it is the longest abandoned railroad in the USA. But the end of one era is the beginning of another. Nationwide there is a trend of rails to trail, and many of the abandoned sections are being reused as trails. Parts of the abandoned sections are to be incorporated into the Great American Rail Trail -- which will be the longest bike trail in the USA when it is completed. There are currently over 200 miles of Washington state terrain on the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail that follows the historic Milwaukee Road Pacific Extension. Other sections of the old Pacific Extension are now trails open to the public (some sections continue to operate as part of modern railroads, so there is no one continuous line). One place to discover the heritage of Milwaukee Road is the Milwaukee Road Depot (now called The Depot). It is one of the historic railroad depots of the Milwaukee Road located in downtown Minneapolis. At one point, the depot serviced 29 trains daily. Today, it stands as a living and breathing monument to the golden age of rail travel. It is now completely re-adapted and hosts two hotels, a full restaurant and bar, underground parking, and 23 meeting rooms. Also, there are items from the Milwaukee in collector hands and the magnificent, restored steam and passenger train that runs on excursions today.



Canadian National, Office-car Special on former EJ&E trackage crosses former Monon now CSX at Dyer IN .



Browsing around Galena, KS exploring Route 66 an old Erie Lackawanna switcher, all rusty and forlorn.

NS Sued by Bondholders

Concealed Safety Issues

The Norfolk Southern Corp was sued by bondholders who said they lost hundreds of millions of dollars because the railroad concealed safety risks prior to the February derailment in Ohio of a train carrying hazardous chemicals. The proposed class action filed in Manhattan federal court covers investors who own \$4.75 billion of Norfolk Southern senior notes and bonds from eight offerings between Aug. 2020 and Jan. 2023.



Bondholders said Norfolk Southern is strictly liable for having in offering prospectuses touted its focus on safety and downplayed the risks of "Precision Scheduled Railroading," which employs longer and heavier trains that require fewer workers. The disclosure shortfalls made buying the bonds "speculative or risky," which was borne out as prices fell, the complaint said. One offering, a 2.9% bond maturing in Aug. 2051, fell to below 63 cents on the dollar from about 70 cents within one month of the Feb. 3 derailment, Refinitiv data show. A Norfolk Southern spokesman declined to comment, saying the Atlanta-based company does not discuss pending litigation. Most large U.S. freight railroads use Precision Scheduled Railroading.

Norfolk Southern faced many lawsuits over the derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, including cases brought by Ohio's attorney general, local residents and shareholders. Bondholder lawsuits over disclosure failures are less common than shareholder lawsuits but can be brought if estimated losses are high. The derailment released more than 1 million gallons of hazardous materials and pollutants into the environment, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered Norfolk Southern to clean up the contamination. Last month, Norfolk Southern took a \$387 million charge for the derailment, excluding expected costs for damage to property values, water and people's long-term health.

The latest lawsuit was filed by pension funds in Ohio and Michigan. There are nearly 30 defendants, including Norfolk Southern executives and directors and 12 financial services companies that underwrote the bonds.



A Yearbook of Railroad Information

By Mark Nieting

Did you know that in December 1944 there were 226,800 miles of rail line in the continental United States. This figure represents the total point-to-point length of the various railways in the country. It does not include the mileage of yard tracks and sidings, nor does it reflect the fact that a mile of tracks and sidings, nor does it reflect the fact that a mile of railway line may include two, three or more parallel tracks.

In 1916 there was 254,037. By 1930 the total was 249,052 and in 1940 233,670.

Former BN Inspector's 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 in particular, 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 defects 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 the 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 Fast Palestine

Zero Emission Locomotives

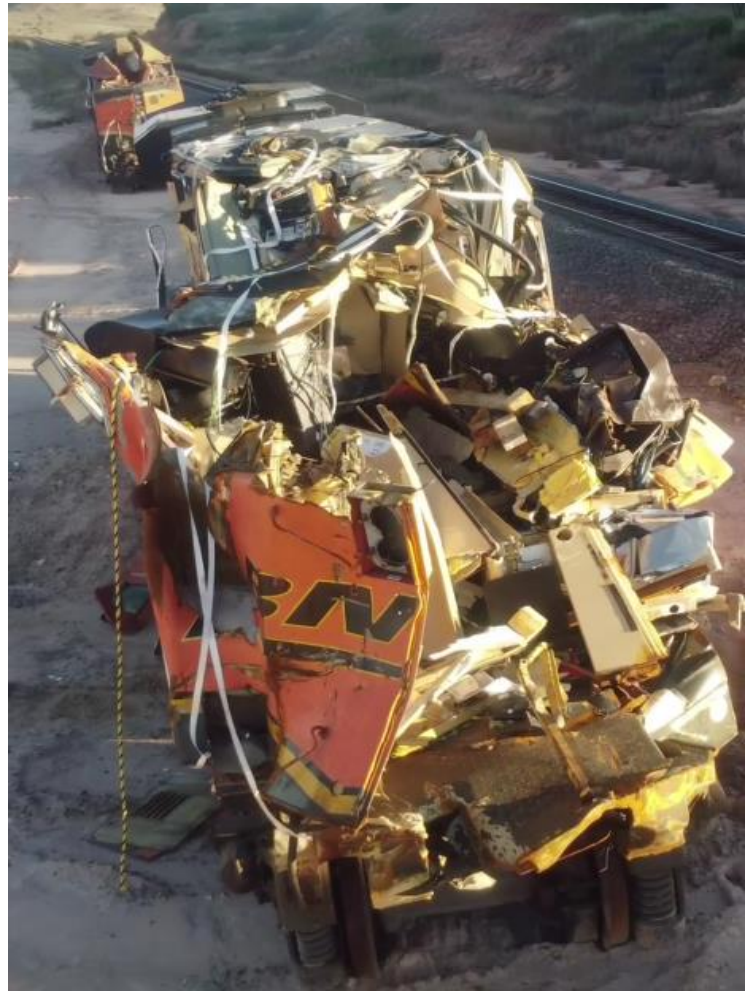
Timetable Set for the Year 2050

By 2050, in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement, zero-emission locomotives may have completely replaced conventional diesel-powered equipment on the railways of the world. Current development of zero-emission switcher locomotives, combined with practical operating experience, increases this likelihood in the foreseeable future. It will be increasingly possible to determine the optimal type or types of zero- or low- emission locomotives to replace conventional diesel units.

The National Railway Historical Society has entered a new partnership with *Railway Age* and *Railway Track & Structures* to present the "Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award," designed to recognize a railroad for its efforts in railway preservation. The intent is "to honor and recognize a North American common-carrier railroad for a historically significant preservation project completed or put into operation within the past five years.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is proposing vetting requirements for certain public transportation, railroad and over-the-road-bus (OTRB) employees under the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (9/11 Act).

Anatomy of a Collision Between Runaway Box Cars, and a Locomotive in Texas



continued from page 3

7. The next MER Convention "Piedmont Junction" will be October 17-20, 2024, in Durham, NC. Registration will begin this April.
8. Division members are reminded that Tidewater Division will host the MER Convention in 2026, and that a Planning Committee will be formed to plan and manage the convention. Please volunteer to help our division be a truly successful host.
9. A joint meeting with the James River is being considered to meet at the Army Transportation Museum at Ft. Eustis. Ft. Eustis has a military railroad system interchange with CSX.
10. ANNOUNCEMENTS: We need to start thinking about November, National Model Railroad Month. The Virginia Beach Central Library has us tentatively scheduled for the 2nd weekend in November. Plan to operate exhibits and interact with visitors Saturday and Sunday. Details will be announced at a future meeting.
11. The next meeting will be in late May. The clinic will be "Weathering". The July clinic will be estate planning for your trains.
12. The Contest was "Favorite Locomotive". John Hammond received a Blue Ribbon for his RS-3 diesel, and Mark Nieting was awarded a Red Ribbon for his F7 diesel.
13. The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 10:35, and Mark Nieting convened his clinic on decaling.

Pat Mahoney
Timekeeper

Amended Minutes of the NMRA Tidewater Division Annual Business Meeting 20 January 2024

1. The Annual Business Meeting was held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on Kings Grant Road in Virginia Beach, VA. Superintendent John Robey called the meeting to order at 10:00 and welcomed guests and a new member MMR Matt Thompson, formerly of the Potomac Division
2. Paymaster Greg Warth reported the status of Division accounts including savings, checking, and cash on hand.
3. Superintendent Robey presented \$400.00 to Prince of Peace Church in appreciation for the use of its facilities for Division meetings during 2023.
4. He also reminded members of the need for a Planning Committee for the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Convention in 2026. A Planning Committee will be appointed in March.
5. The election results and Board of Directors appointments were announced. John Fallon is appointed as Assistant Superintendent; Pat Mahoney is appointed as Timekeeper, relieving Bob Cook; Fred Humphrey is appointed as Paymaster, relieving Greg Warth; and Chuck Davis, Bill Fay, and Wayne Williams are appointed as Members at Large.
6. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Barry Cruthers for Hospitality, to Roger Bir for Callboard/Webmaster, and to Bill Fay Contest Coordinator.
7. Certificates for Service were presented to Bob Cook, John Cryderman, Mark Nesting, and Greg Warth for their outstanding work as members of the Board of Directors.
8. Volunteers of the Year Awards were presented to John Fallon and John Cryderman for their dedication to supporting the Division efforts to promote model railroading.
9. Modeler of the Year Award was presented to Greg Leiphart for his excellence in craftsmanship.
10. The Contest Award was presented to Mark Nieting (1st Place), John Cryderman (2nd Place), and Eric Warner (3rd Place).
11. The Superintendent's Award was presented to Sean Henderson for his generous support and technical assistance to Division members.

Member announcements: Steve Prescott reported that the Atlantic Coast "S" Gaugers dissolved, and their trailer and all the trains contained in the trailer were purchased by the Aviation Museum. The museum used part of the annual donation that Sharon and Steve make to the museum to purchase the trailer and trains. The Aviation Museum will continue to display them during the annual Planes, Trains, and Santa Days, and any other event using the S gauge layouts. The ACSG members will continue to maintain and operate the exhibits when requested. He also presented to John Robey a commemorative booklet about the acquisition of a U.S. Navy trainer flown by the late President George H.W. Bush.

Gary Brown showed photos of train sets presented to children at Christmas. Sets were made from member donations.

Pat Mahoney reported that the Virginia Beach Central Library was very pleased with the displays and operating trains during National Model Railroad Month (November) that the Division is already scheduled for November 2024. Fred Humphrey asked for volunteers to help dismantle an O gauge layout.

12. There was no new business from the floor, and the meeting was adjourned at 1140.

- Minutes amended to correctly document Steve Prescott's report of ACSG sale of trailer and assets to the Aviation Museum.

The Engineer

By S. W. Bradley

As the train rolls up to the station gate
Out of the night and the storm
And you rush to the arms of those who wait
And the hearts that are flaming warm,

Do you ever stop as you turn again
To the welcome of kith and kin,
To think of the grimy oily men
Who brought the express train in?

Night, and the plain like a sea outspreads,
Snow, or the lash of rain,
And the rails starch out, twin iron threads
In the path of the speeding train;

But the eye in the cab is trained and keen
And the hand on the throttle is true,
And if danger or death has lurked unseen
No one but the train men knew.

In the comfort and ease of the Pullman car
You lounged, at rest and secure,
While the man up in front has guided you far,
Steady and swift and sure;

The country shrinks to the width of a map
Wherever you may choose to roam,
All thanks to the grimy oily chap
Who brings the express train home.

From *RAILROAD MAGAZINE*, August, 1945 Vol. 38, No. 3

(this article was submitted by Division Timekeeper Pat Mahoney)



Two CSX engines cross at the NS diamond in Vickers, OH



Train trips in the US versus Europe.

Officials say PTC would not have prevented crash.

NTSB to investigate

The collision of three Norfolk Southern trains in Pennsylvania early this month highlights the shortcomings of the automated braking system that was created to prevent such crashes. None of the circumstances the National Transportation Safety Board described Tuesday in its preliminary report on the March 2 derailment would have triggered the automated positive train control system to stop the trains.

Not only was the system incapable of stopping the second train before it smashed into the back of a stopped train, but it also couldn't stop the third train. It ran into the derailed cars blocking its track when it arrived less than a minute later. "PTC today has not generally been designed to protect them in that situation," railroad safety expert Chris Barkan said.



Congress required railroads to develop the positive train control system after a deadly 2008 collision between a Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train in Chatsworth, California. That crash killed 25 people, including the Metrolink engineer, and injured more than 100. It took more than a decade and roughly \$15 billion for the railroads to design and complete the system, but it only works in certain circumstances.

In this Pennsylvania crash, the eastbound train that smashed into a stopped train in Lower Saucon Township along the Lehigh River had slowed to 13 mph (21 kph) after passing a restricted speed signal. But without a stop signal, the braking system would not have been triggered.

The three railcars that derailed after that first collision blocked the adjacent track, and the third train smashed into them at about 22 mph (35 kph). The braking system relies on information from the railroad's signals to stop a train, and it can't detect when something is blocking the tracks. But given that the third train arrived less than a minute later, there wouldn't have been enough time to stop it anyway.

Six railcars, including three carrying ethanol and butane residue, derailed along with two locomotives on the third train, sending the locomotives into the river. No hazardous materials spilled other than the diesel that leaked from the locomotives into the river. The seven crew members aboard the three trains had minor injuries.



Norfolk Southern estimated that the crashes caused \$2.5 million damage, but the Atlanta-based railroad declined to comment on the NTSB's preliminary report. The final report that will detail the cause won't be completed for more than a year.

NTSB spokesman Keith Holloway said preliminary information "suggests that PTC limitations were involved in the accident" and no mechanical problems have been found at this early stage.

UP Invest in World Class Safety

Launches New Training Program

Union Pacific continues making progress towards its goal to be the best in safety, investing in people, enhancing infrastructure, transforming culture, and harnessing the transformative power of technology. The company's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of its employees, customers, the environment, and communities it serves is delivering tangible outcomes – In 2023, Union Pacific experienced zero work-related fatalities and a notable reduction in serious injuries compared to the previous year. Serious derailments on UP's network also declined 26% in 2023 compared with 2019 while average maximum train length grew. "We've implemented significant changes to our safety program," said Rod Doerr, vice president and chief



safety officer. "To be the best in safety, we must identify potential risks and take action to mitigate them." To cultivate a safety-focused mindset within teams, Union Pacific implemented new policies and enhanced training for craft professionals across the railroad's 23-state network.

Transportation team members Kary Cluck, superintendent-Train Operations, and Jeff Collins, senior manager-Train Operations, recently led fellow railroaders through The Journey to World-Class Safety training in Sparks, Nevada. "Safety isn't just about what the railroad's doing; it's about what an individual is doing and what's on their mind," said Kary Cluck, superintendent-Train Operations. "We all have things going on at home, but when we're at work, we can't be distracted."

The Journey to World-Class Safety training sessions includes face-to-face coaching and engagement with local Operating leaders who emphasize the importance of embracing safety as a core value. More than 3,300 Transportation craft professionals have embarked on the journey since its January 2024 launch. Participants focus on Union Pacific's Go Home Safe choices and related critical Operating Rules – five for Mechanical, six for Engineering and 12 for Train, Engine and Yard employees. Cluck recently led a class for 10 craft professionals in Sparks, Nevada, focusing on risk identification and making safe choices to prevent serious incidents and injuries. "We don't want anybody to get hurt," Cluck said. "It's about getting everybody on the same page with our expectations for safety."



Man Arrested for Theft

Individual caught with human leg

Following a deadly train collision in Wasco, the Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) arrested a man for removing evidence from the scene. The Kern County Sheriff's Office says Resendo Tellez, 27, was arrested near the Amtrak station. Jail records show he was arrested on misdemeanor charges of removing human body parts from an area that is not a cemetery without law enforcement approval.

The person was hit by the train Friday morning. Burlington Northern Santa Fe, a railroad company, confirmed the incident via email. They also say the person was hit in front of the Amtrak platform. The investigation into that incident is pending.

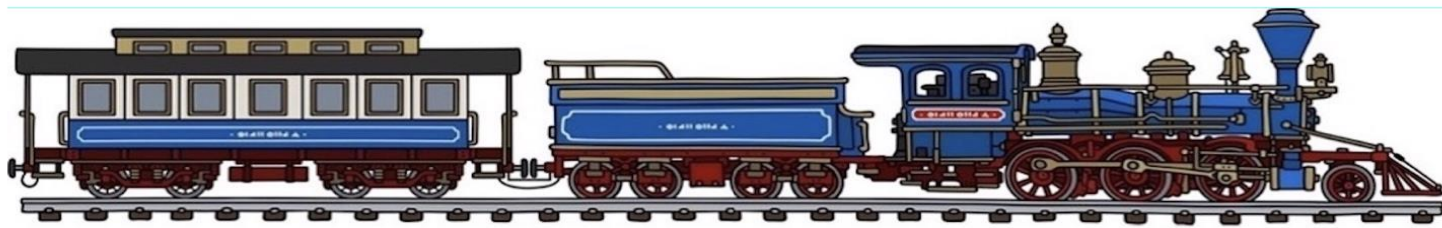
KCSO says shortly after 8 am, deputies arrested Tellez near the train station. Video obtained by 23ABC from someone at the scene shows Tellez holding the alleged body part while walking down the sidewalk. Tellez is scheduled to be in court on Tuesday, 3/26/24.

Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads

Fulfilling a Dream

By Greg Warth

Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads



Where History, Art and Science Come Together

How many of us have had the dream of building a model railroad? Some of us have accomplished it by building layouts within our own homes or clubs. I've always loved trains since I was six years old and got that first American Flyer around the Christmas tree. And as I was growing up, I would occasionally get to see a real layout built by one of my friend's fathers. I loved seeing that and I always knew I wanted to build one for myself. I finally started the process in 1990 and after the 5th generation of layouts built and torn down, at age 76, I now have a small semblance of my original dream, in N scale, in a small room partitioned off the attic. It's not perfect but I enjoy it.

The fun of doing that has never resolved, and even now, I am building new and smaller layouts, just because it's...well, fun. And I want to share that enjoyment with others. And now, over the past 3 years, several of my model railroad companions and I have invested a huge amount of time and energy into a new dream - to create great layouts inside a large museum for others to see and enjoy and operate – something special and spectacular - something people will be excited to see and continue to visit over and over again. We are driven to accomplish this, just for the love of the hobby if for no other reason, and to see the fun and excitement in others' eyes, young and old alike, when they experience it.

Other groups of model railroaders have done this. Consider the [San Diego Model Railroad Museum](#), the [Colorado Model Railroad Museum](#), the [Texas City Museum](#), the [Lehigh Valley and Keystone Club Railroad](#), just to name a few. Look even closer at [Chesapeake Bay & Western RR](#) in York County. These all started with a dream, a vision, a purpose, which eventually led to something great.

Imagine our own place in Tidewater, Virginia where we can build and develop our own "something great," just as others have done in their areas – a place where you can create new ideas, use new technology, develop new works of 3-dimensional art for others to see and appreciate – a place where future generations of model railroaders will be born – a place where future engineers can learn about STEM/STEAM concepts. Visualize a modern, well-designed 15,000 square foot space inside the current MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) building in Virginia Beach, where ten different historical layouts demonstrate the eastern Virginia railroad development from the 1800s forward. Imagine school children visiting every Wednesday, families streaming in and out on all the other days. Students will be constantly building and rebuilding layouts to work toward getting scholarships. Imagine teaching interested students about how to build a model or create a miniature landscape.

We have already accumulated an enormous amount of railroad history to use for the Museum, along with a huge collection of historical digital railroad images. We intend to use this information to publish a book about the very interesting early railroad transportation history in Hampton Roads, which was instrumental in the industrial development of Virginia and the rest of the country. We have a storage unit that is amassing a huge amount of physical donations already provided by the public to use in the Museum. We have people calling frequently ready to volunteer in the Museum. Many call

continued on page 15

just to find out more about it and to ask whether it is open yet. There is definitely a lot of public interest.

We knew this wouldn't be easy when we started this project, but when you're driven by a dream, you just keep at it 'till you get it. Quitting is not an option. We have the desire, the knowhow, the plans, the nonprofit organization, the website (MRMHR.org), and we even have found several possible locations including the MOCA, which will be vacant in a couple of years.

So, what's the problem?

None of us in our planning group has the personal financial resources that it would take to accomplish this alone. We are all donating what we can on a monthly basis to help grow the Museum's bank account, but it's slow going. We need a benefactor, but the two philanthropists that we've talked to want to see a facility, a building where this would be accomplished, a place where the dream can be visualized. Plus, they want to see that we have some "skin in the game," so to speak.

One suggestion is to request some support from all the model railroaders in the area who would like to see this Museum develop. If all of us could provide a pledge of a certain amount per month of what we can afford, this would go a long way to help decide what kind of facility we could acquire, and it would demonstrate our commitment to the project. We would like to get something at least around 4000 square feet just to get started.

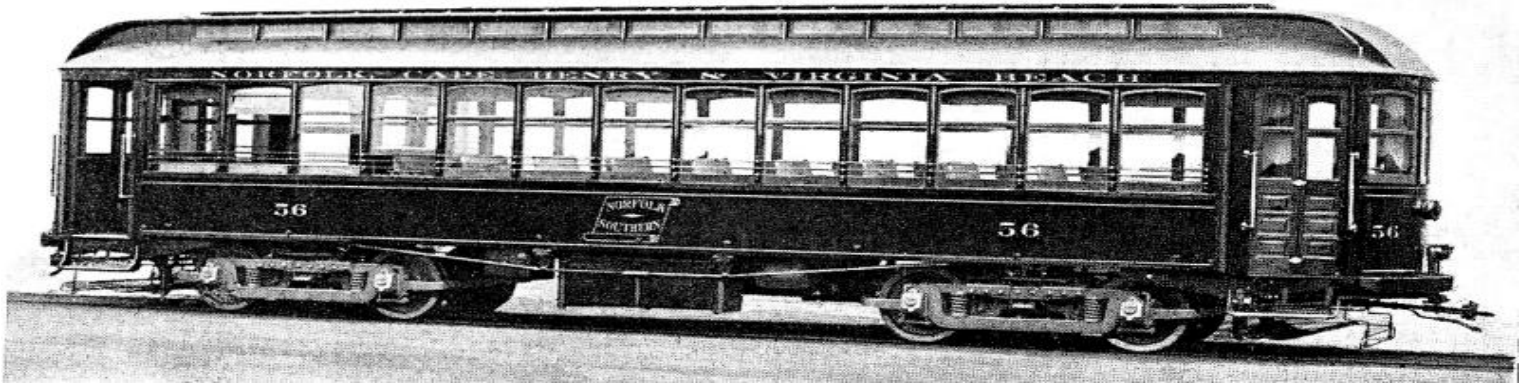
This would just be a pledge, not an actual payment yet. That would come later when we get a place. We just need to know how many would be willing to do this. We will also ask the public to contribute pledges as well. At the same time, we are continuing our quest for grants from major model railroad sellers and manufacturers. When we have enough pledges to support paying the lease for a small space initially, we can start moving forward. And once a philanthropist sees the commitment we and the public have toward this project, we will be more likely to get a benefactor to support us.

Please note that this dream has nothing to do with membership in the NMRA, or any other model railroad club. It is a totally separate, standalone entity that requires support from you as an individual model railroader. A few have already stepped up to the plate and for that we are greatly appreciative.

We will get there eventually. As mentioned, quitting is not an option. We are dedicated to this project and will see it to its completion. Our dream is to one day see the doors of an interactive, informative museum open to those who love trains, models, and railroad history. We hope that is your dream as well.

If you wish to make a pledge, please let us know by sending an email to treasurer@mrmhr.org. Or go to the website and provide a [monthly pledge](#) or even a [monthly donation](#) if you wish to start now. Please feel free to browse our website to learn more... MRMHR.org

Make a pledge now! Something! Anything! You don't actually have to pay anything until we have a place.
Let's get something started.



"This is a brand-new Brill interurban car just built and photographed in Philadelphia, Pa in 1907, the year the original Princess Anne Hotel burned down on the oceanfront at Virginia Beach. This is the builder's photo of number 56 of the original pre 1982 Norfolk Southern subsidiary line "Norfolk, Cape Henry & Virginia Beach." These arch topped clerestory windowed passenger cars were among the most beautiful pieces of early railroad equipment ever made!"

This is but one example of the ten thousand plus images gathered together by the museum's historian of railroad equipment not only in Hampton Roads and the Mid-Atlantic, but across the U. S. and beyond.

continued from page 1

Division roster. Just to explain, the NMRA sends out a roster of Division members to the MER each month. The Business Manager of the MER then forwards the roster to each appropriate Superintendent covering just their division. Each superintendent is under a strict requirement to only share this roster with appropriate board members, such as the Membership Chairman and the newsletter editor. Obviously, the editor requires the information to send out the newsletter via email. All the divisions transmit their newsletters by email as postal mailing has been cost prohibitive now days! The Superintendent also uses the email list to send out meeting notices and information for the membership that comes up between meetings. Now, having said that, we have a few members that have failed to, or don't want to list their email addresses or phone numbers with the NMRA, and as you can figure out really quick, they don't receive notice of meetings, meeting changes, or important information between meetings. There isn't anything I can do with out your contact information. Listening to the members and superintendents, the NMRA has changed the website to when you sign in you can now update and add to your contact information. I encourage you to maintain and keep your contact information up to date. Each month, I receive about 6 rejected emailing's to members...."no such address on record", etc....

Other items of interest are the registration for the MER Convention, Piedmont Junction, will be opening up in April. The Piedmont Division has come up with a really good schedule of events, tours and clinics. I certainly encourage every member to consider attending. It will be in Durham, NC October 17-20. Our upcoming clinics will be Weathering your models at the May meeting and Estate Planning at the July meeting. And, as always, if you have an idea for a really good clinic that you would like to see the Division conduct at one of our meetings, let me know. There is a wealth of information out there that we can help you put to together. Till next time, enjoy the hobby!!

John Robey

Superintendent