



# BLUE RIDGE DISPATCHER

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No. 4



Chapter member Ian Whaley brings us the April program. His program is entitled "Rails to the Crystal Coast- Operations on Norfolk Southern's EC-Line". Ian hails from Maysville, NC, and is a sophomore at Liberty University. Seen above is NS train E16 crossing the Trent River Drawbridge on its way towards the State Port at Morehead City. November 2017. Come to the meeting and checkout some tar heel rail action!

**Wednesday, April 18, 2018. 6:00 p.m.**  
**Charley's Restaurant. 707 Graves Mill Rd. Lynchburg, VA.**



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Lynchburg, Virginia



## **Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS Minutes of Meeting – March 14, 2018**

President Rick Johnson called the meeting to order at Charley's Restaurant at 7:30 pm. Rick welcomed 20 members and 3 guests for a total of 23 in attendance. Our guests for the evening were Dona Duvall, Mary Guthrow and Denise Mays.

### **Announcements:**

- Rick announced that after a six month trial period of BRC business meetings beginning at 7:00 pm, all future business meetings will again begin at 7:30 pm.
- Rick announced that BRC member Warren Middleton died March 5th. Final arrangements are pending. Norris reported that BRC members Gordon Watkins and Gary Quale, and his wife Kathy, were ill. He passed around "Get Well" cards for those attending to sign. Gary Quale, who evidently was feeling much better, actually showed up as the cards were being passed around and got to sign his own card!! Gary also brought everyone up-to-date concerning Warren, Gordon and himself.
- The minutes for the February meeting were distributed in the March "Blue Ridge Dispatcher".
- There were no additions or corrections and the minutes were approved as distributed.

Treasurer's Report: John Tanner reported.

Old Business: Rick read a "Thank You" letter from The Amherst County Historical Society & Museum for our recent donation.

New Business: There was no new business.

Vice President's Report: Gale McKinley – No report.

Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS National Representative: Bob Leslie - Not present.

Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS Chairman of Virginia's Rail Heritage Region Partners: Norris Deyerle stated that everyone was invited to the Boone's Mill Depot open house.

Webmaster Report: John Siegle - No report.

Editor's Report: Garland Harper - Not present. Rick thanked Garland for getting the newsletter out.

Program: Steve Hutchison presented a slide program featuring slides he had purchased of western railroads. Steve graciously donated the carousel tray with the slides to the BRC after his presentation! Thank you Steve!

Upcoming Programs: There will be a "Fun" meeting March 28. There was no preference as to slides or digital. Rick will decide. Our next regular meeting will be held the third Wednesday, April 18th due to a scheduling conflict at Charley's. One of our newest and youngest members, Ian Whaley, will be providing the program on railroads of eastern North Carolina!

50/50 Winner: A Charley's kitchen staff person won!

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rick Johnson, acting BRC Secretary

**Prolific N&W photographer dies** - William Griscom Coxe Gordon passed away on Thursday, March 15, 2018, after a brief battle with cancer according to his family. He was 80 years old.

The N&W Historical Society family knew Bill for his masterful photography documenting many eastern railroads, including an unsurpassed collection of Norfolk and Western photos from the late steam, early diesel era. He shared his extraordinary photos and memories generously for three years through his Flickr account. To date there have been 3.6 million views of his photos. That is an amazing statistic.

He worked as a steam power mechanical engineer after graduating from the University of Virginia with a degree in mechanical engineering. He loved railroading ever since watching the main line Baltimore & Ohio pass by his dad's business in Wilmington, Delaware as a kid. A subscription to "Trains" magazine and scores of weekend trips across the backcountry of Virginia cemented a lifelong love for the hobby. Between the years 1957 and 1962, Gordon made dozens of trips across the Appalachian landscape capturing the honest character of the region. He continued to pursue his passion for photography even into recent years including 611 excursions.

His daughter's words sum it up best "He will surely be missed by many and in our hearts always."

Please take delight in viewing his collection of photos at this address...

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/130647200@N05/albums>

**Chapter member Wayland Moore recalls his acquaintance with Bill Gordon** - Thanks for the news regarding Bill Gordon. I was wondering how old Bill was. I stumbled onto him about a year ago looking for more information about the Brimstone RR. It appears he had been to the same places as myself, just a number of year before me. He got to the Brimstone in Graham County, K&T [home of 4501] while these operations were hauling freight with steam and when I got there it was diesels. My first cab ride was on a Sou Ry SW-1 on the Brimstone, next cab ride was a former D&RGW Alco switcher on the K&T [immediately before I knew about 4501]. While I got a cab ride on the Graham County on a freight run, it was mostly tourist operation when I rode it.

Bill's photo work was just beautiful....great shots no matter what the weather. Saw on one of the flickr comments that he used a medium format camera and it really showed in the sharpness and clarity of the images and his lighting and printing was absolutely great. So sad only one photo of VBR but at least it was color. And really enjoyed seeing C&O that he captured in the Charlottesville area. All of this in addition to the beautiful N&W photos. It does make one wonder if he got all of his good stuff posted on flickr or is/was there more that has not been posted on the internet.

All take care, Wayland

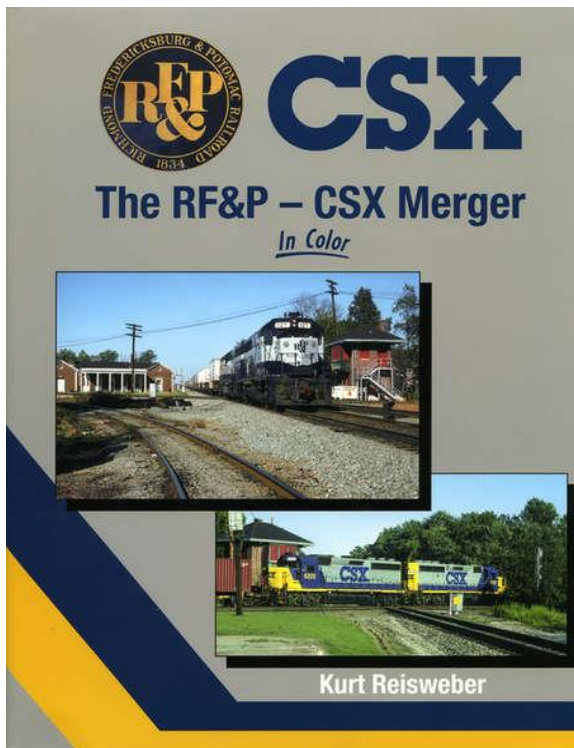
**Sympathy extended to the family of Chapter member Brad Dobbins** - Colonel Clarence Holloway, Brad Dobbins' father-in-law, died April 10 in Montgomery, AL. He would have been 97 this July. Col. Holloway was one of the last Tuskegee airmen and also a Deacon in the church where Martin Luther King began his ministry.

Arrangements have not been completed but there will be a service in Montgomery and then another in Virginia where Col. Holloway will be buried next to his wife, who passed away several years ago.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to you and yours.

**Memorial service for Chapter member Warren Middleton** - A memorial service for Chapter member Warren Middleton who died on March 5 will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 20 in the Westminster-Canterbury Chapel on the second floor directly above the main lobby. Westminster-Canterbury is located at 501 V.E.S. Rd. All guests are asked to check in at the reception desk in the lobby, to the left under the pedestrian bridge over the driveway as you enter W-C from V.E.S. Road.

W-C resident Gary Quale offers this advice about parking for those planning to attend. Westminster-Canterbury is building a new building on the west side of the campus adjacent to Williams Rd., so parking will be more difficult on that side. The best option is to pass by the Humankind entrance on Linden St. at the bottom of the hill on VES Rd., and take the second left onto the W-C campus. As you come in this driveway, you will pass a parking entry on your right. The spaces closest to the residence buildings in this lot are for handicapped residents or guests, the next spaces are reserved for elderly residents, and the next spaces, closest to the entry are for guests. If that area is full, there may be spaces in the employee parking lot to the left and a little further in from this other entry driveway. Should both of these areas be full, the best bet is to go back to VES Rd., go back to Linden St., either use the Woods Edge lot on the first right (again following the markings that the spaces closest to the building are for handicapped residents and visitors, the next spaces are for elderly residents, and the furthest spaces are for guests). If that is full, there probably will be spaces in a new lot on the left side of Linden St. Regardless of where you park, walk in along the second left roadway from V.E.S. Rd., when you reach the 3rd floor 'bridge' over the road enter the main lobby to the left, speak the receptionist, and they will guide you to the Chapel via the nearest elevator.



BK-18-505    [www.chessieshop.com](http://www.chessieshop.com)

### **The RF&P - CSX Merger In Color**

by Kurt Reisweber

Latest in a series of books about railroad mergers from Morning Sun is the RF&P-CSX Merger in Color by C&OHS member Kurt Reisweber. This book has the standard 128 pages and is profusely illustrated, all in color photos. It covers the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad in its final years beginning with the transition to Amtrak for passenger service in 1971 and continues with photos and descriptions of changes wrought by CSX after the merger in 1991. The most recent photos and text cover the period until 2017, so the book covers a period of forty-six years.

Most of the photos were taken by the author with a few others shot by friends of the author covering gaps in the coverage. A few early shots at Broad Street Station in Richmond covering Amtrak operations there are featured early and are supplemented by shots of the new Staples Mill Station (including on its very first day in operation). There are many photos out on the line including many locations seen before and a few rarely seen in print ever.

As a bonus there is a short chapter on the RF&P as a real estate company written by Dick Beadles, who was the next-to-last president of the independent RF&P. As a reminder for C&OHS members, the RF&P was owned one-sixth by the C&O, along with the Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line, Southern Railway, Pennsylvania Railroad, and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Hardcover, 128 pages.

Order from the C&O Historical Society | 312 East Ridgeway St - Clifton Forge VA | 540-862-2210  
[www.chessieshop.com](http://www.chessieshop.com)



Please note the new date for the Boones Mill (VA) Model Train Show

**BOONES MILL**

# MODEL TRAIN SHOW

BUY, SELL, AND TRADE RAILROAD MEMORABILIA

Town of Boones Mill Municipal Building Annex

## SATURDAY MAY 5TH, 2018

### 9 AM TO 4 PM

BOONES MILL N&W DEPOT WILL BE OPEN FOR TOURS.

ALSO OPEN FOR TOURS **TITAN TRAINS** (1/8TH SCALE MANUFACTURER)



FREE ADMISSION - FOOD VENDORS AVAILABLE

**Gladstone station news** - With the revelation that the Gladstone depot may be on borrowed time, I decided to make it a priority to get there for a few shots including this venerable structure. Accordingly, I headed out to achieve this on one of those much-colder-than-average mornings in late March.

I approached from the east end of the yard. I feared one of the first scenes I saw was perhaps symbolic, several vultures perched on the end of a derelict hopper. As I neared the station area I became aware that a short ballast train was easing out of the yard to the west with a slug set. The trailing unit was in a GP30 carbody, the first one of these veterans I had seen in quite a while.

After about an hour manifest train Q302 (pictured above) appeared with a pair of GE's and a very healthy train. I was quite surprised that there was no pause to change crews; that was the routine for decades before a Clifton Forge-Richmond local was recently initiated to handle the switching at Lynchburg, Gladstone, and Strathmore.

Garland informed me that a coal train had passed him in Reusens and I should be expecting it around 10:30. While I was waiting, a pickup stopped, and the occupants got out and surveyed the aging depot. I approached them to see if either knew anything about the fate of the station. As luck would have it, the man was Paul Zelinsky, vice-president of the "Friends of the Gladstone Depot". In fact, he was there specifically to attend an afternoon meeting about this topic.

Soon the coal train passed with the usual pair of GE's. I bade good-bye to Mr. Zelinsky and assured him I would call to follow the progress of the talks with CSX.

As I write this it is the evening of Friday, April 13. Here is a brief rundown of the current situation and the history leading up to it.

Last fall it was felt that everything was in place for the "Friends" organization to take possession of the depot. A "T21" grant had been approved to cover the initial costs. Then lightning struck with the sudden passing of Hunter Harrison. What followed was a re-shuffling of the primary individuals involved in this process at CSX. Not surprisingly, priorities changed, the process slowed down, and the deadline for the grant money passed.

Fast forward to the morning I met Mr. Zelinsky in this small Nelson County town. He is still very optimistic, but readily admits the process may take quite a while. The group certainly has the strong support of many parties helping them to achieve their goal. Participants at the meeting that Friday included members of the Nelson Board of Supervisors, the President of the CSX Virginia Business unit, a representative from the Virginia Department of Historic Preservation, and an attorney from the Caskie-Frost law office.

Although I must emphasize that nothing is final, the situation should unfold something like this: the railroad would donate that station to the preservation group and sell them the land on which it stands for "fair market value". In return CSX would receive a tax deduction for its charitable contribution. A fence, likely chain-link, would need to be erected to separate the station from the tracks. CSX would grant the group a specified length of time to acquire the funds to build a foundation and move the depot to the lot where the "Y" is now located. If this can be accomplished within the allotted time, the railroad would give the group the land where the YMCA is, and the "Friends" group would return the original station plat to CSX. If the funds cannot be raised within the specified time frame, the station would then be razed in situ.

This process obviously has many moving parts...everything is quite tentative at this point. I will try to have an update by the time of our meeting.

- Skip "Groundhog" Hansberry



## Amtrak Crescent performance suffers. NS offers reasons/ solutions -

Anyone who has had dealings with Amtrak's Crescent of late will certainly agree that the on-time performance of #19 and #20 through the Deep South has been abysmal in recent months. What follows is a link to a chart detailing the arrival and departure of Amtrak #20 at Lynchburg for the past few months. You will agree that things have not been good. Let us hope things will improve.

[https://juckins.net/amtrak\\_status/archive/html/historychart.php?train\\_num=20&station=LYH&date\\_start=02%2F01%2F2018&date\\_end=04%2F11%2F2018&sort=d\\_dp&chartsize=2&smooth=0](https://juckins.net/amtrak_status/archive/html/historychart.php?train_num=20&station=LYH&date_start=02%2F01%2F2018&date_end=04%2F11%2F2018&sort=d_dp&chartsize=2&smooth=0)

In fact, Amtrak issued a "report card" on how good (or bad) of a job its host railroads have been doing. Progressive Railroading published this story.

Amtrak has begun posting a quarterly "report card" that rates how long its trains are delayed while traveling on host freight railroads' tracks.

The majority of Amtrak's network operates on track owned, maintained and dispatched by freight railroads. Amtrak delays on host railroads are caused primarily by freight railroads that require passenger trains to wait so that freight trains can operate first, Amtrak officials said in the report card.

Federal law requires that Amtrak passenger trains must be given preference over freight trains using any rail line. There are only a few exceptions to that rule, according to Amtrak.

Amtrak's first Host Railroad Report Card gives letter grades to six Class I's based on delays per 10,000 train miles. Specifically, that is defined as the number of minutes of host-responsible delay, divided by the number of Amtrak train miles operated over that host, times 10,000.

The first report card covers January through December 2017. Amtrak gave Canadian Pacific a grade of A for performance, BNSF Railway Co. a B+, Union Pacific Railroad a B-, CSX a C, and Norfolk Southern Railway and CN an F.

Following are some Amtrak comments regarding hosts' performance on sample routes:

- 97 percent of passengers on Amtrak's Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha service, which operates on CP track, arrived at their destinations on time. Ninety percent of trips experienced no freight train interference.
- 90 percent of passengers on Amtrak's Carl Sandberg/Illinois Zephyr service arrived at their destinations on time with less than 4 minutes of delay by BNSF freight trains.
- More than 57 percent of passengers arrived late at their destinations on the Coast Starlight service, which operates on UP track. On an average trip on this route, passengers experienced 4 separate instances of delay caused by UP freight trains, accounting for 48 minutes of delay on average.
- 50 percent of passengers traveling on the Amtrak Cardinal service on CSX track arrived late at their destinations by an average of 1 hour and 27 minutes. On 85 percent of trips, the Cardinal's 350 passengers are delayed by CSX freight trains.
- Over 67 percent of passengers arrived late at their destinations while traveling on Amtrak's Crescent service, which operates on NS track. The typical Amtrak train, carrying 350 passengers, is delayed over 1 hour and 40 minutes due to NS freight trains. Many Amtrak trains wait as long as 3 hours and 12 minutes for NS freight trains using this track.
- Over 200,000 passengers arrived late at their destinations on the Illini/Saluki service, which operates on CN track. Amtrak trains were delayed by CN freight trains on nearly 90 percent of trips on this service.

To read the Amtrak report card copy this link: <http://media.amtrak.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CY2017-Report-Card-%E2%80%93-FAQ-%E2%80%93-Route-Details.pdf>

**Norfolk Southern to Ease Congestion in South** - Norfolk Southern is taking steps to unclog congested areas of its system in Alabama and Georgia, where a combination of traffic growth and bad weather have gummed up yards and single-track main lines. "Our No. 1 priority is to return velocity to the railroad," CFO Cynthia Earhart told an investors' conference. For the year-to-date compared to the first quarter of 2017, average train speed on NS has declined 16 percent, to 19 mph, while terminal dwell has risen 23 percent, to 29.9 hours, largely due to problems centered on the Alabama and Georgia divisions. Norris Yard in Irondale, Ala., outside Birmingham, is plugged, forcing NS to hold trains outside the terminal for miles in each direction in sidings on the former Southern Railway main line. Terminal dwell at Norris Yard was 53 hours well above the 31-hour average in the first quarter last year. Across the system, five other yards were operating with average dwell times above 40 hours, including Chattanooga, Tenn.; Columbus, Ohio; Elkhart, Ind.; Macon; and Sheffield, Ala. NS has temporarily transferred 55 train and engine employees to Birmingham from around the system. The new crews will primarily be working in the terminal, but some will be handling road trains. To ease main line congestion on the East End District between Birmingham and Atlanta, NS has returned through traffic to the Central of Georgia District. NS is far from alone in experiencing service problems. Last year all of the Class I railroads reported year-over-year declines in 'Association of American Railroads' performance measures as train speeds slowed and cars spent more time in yards. - Trains News Wire



## SIGHTINGS



NS research train spotted behind Kemper Street Station March 27. Train tied up for the night in the storage track where the Regional Amtrak train used to, and left the next morning for points north. (G. Harper)



Chapter member Ian Whaley spotted the Norfolk Southern business car train returning from its annual trip to the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, GA. Monday night, April 9. Seen here is the train, symbolled 951, captured in a great pan shot as it sped north past the Liberty University campus



Another set of export units for India - March 23 saw yet another set of GE locomotives built for the Indian Railways pass through town. Skip Hansberry captured the train first at Tye River (above left), and then again at Monroe (above right). Skunked by a passing cloud as the train approached, your Editor caught the train as it passed by Kemper Street (right).

Here's a link for more information on these brightly painted locomotives:  
<http://www.railwaygazette.com/news/single-view/view/ge-transportation-unveils-indian-railways-evolution-locomotive.html>





**Derelict depot at Forest demolished** - April 3 was a sad day for railfans in the area, who witnessed the demolition of the dilapidated depot at Forest, VA. Norfolk Southern's intentions to tear down the structure have been known for quite a while now. The place had seen several break-ins including fires being set recently and was in very, very sad shape.



Going.....

(Roy Evans)



Going...

(N&W HS)



GONE! :'(

(Don Stokes)



**Amtrak policy changes regarding privately-owned cars and charter trains ignites uproar** - As you may have heard Amtrak announced recently that it would discontinue handling privately-owned railroad cars and would cease operation of chartered trains for a variety of reasons, including train delay issues and cost-benefit concerns. Needless to say this did not set well with many parties, especially the private car owners. Here is National's reaction to the policy change

To all Members, Chapters and NRHS Face Book followers: As you may of heard Amtrak has announced a new policy for private passenger cars and special trips. This change will affect many of our members and I would like you to read it. You can find the Amtrak Policy at <https://admin.nrhs.com/public/AmtrakPolicyChanges.pdf>

I would like you to contact your congressmen and women expressing your thoughts on this Amtrak policy change. You can find the committees and the contacts at [http://rpca.com/webpages/Gov\\_Contacts.html](http://rpca.com/webpages/Gov_Contacts.html)

It would be nice if you also contacted your Senators and Representatives about this expressing your views on the policy change. The link to find them and their contacts is at the bottom of the RPCA Gov\_Contact page.

Thanks, Al Weber - President, NRHS

There may be, however, a little wiggle and modification of the policy as detailed in this news item that follows.

### **Private Car Owners Talk with Amtrak About Policy Changes for Handling of PVs**

At least they are talking. Amtrak executives spoke April 3 on a conference call with representatives of private railroad passenger cars who have decried a policy change by the nation's passenger carrier that has banned charter trains and specials, and made it more difficult for car owners to move their cars on Amtrak trains.

Amtrak management told the car owners that the policy change followed a review of carrying private rail cars on Amtrak trains and how that affects the on-time performance of the trains as well as the passenger company's finances.

During the call, Amtrak officials reportedly reiterated their intent to cease adding and removing private cars at most intermediate points.

"If you want cars switched at every station, we can't do that," an Amtrak representative said during the April 3 call. "We are interested in your thoughts about what you think is reasonable and consistent with the mission of not delaying trains."

Amtrak officials didn't rule out carrying private cars, but seemed to suggest that it would prefer to do that at route endpoints because en route switching can delay a train.

The private car groups made suggestions that could improve on-time performance, but preserve midpoint pickups, such as requiring private car operators to have their own qualified mechanical personnel to help facilitate midpoint switching, or to add private cars to front of trains to eliminate extra switching moves.

The private car owners also suggested having their cars operate on a generator until reaching a station with sufficient dwell time to allow head-end power to be connected.

The meeting notes were distributed to members of the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners and the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance.

Among the mid-point Amtrak stops at which private cars are sometimes added or removed are Lamy, New Mexico; Huntington, West Virginia; Denver; St. Paul, Minnesota; Whitefish, Montana; Charlotte, North Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Tucson, Arizona; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Jacksonville, Florida; Orlando, Florida; Milwaukee; Cleveland; St. Louis; San Antonio, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska; and Kansas City, Missouri.

Amtrak indicated during the call that it is reviewing the fees it charges private car owners to haul their cars.

The private car owners said that in particular they want Amtrak to better explain what CEO Richard Anderson meant when he wrote in a memo to Amtrak employees that specials and charters were not meeting Amtrak's expectations of "fully allocated profitable margin[s]." At one point the private car owners expressed a willingness to pay double the actual cost of moving private cars on Amtrak.

The conference call did not discuss special trains, but Amtrak has refused to handle a planned AAPRCO train, the *Black Hills Special*, that was to have operated from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Denver on May 17-22.  
- Akron Railroad Club

Especially miffed nearby by the policy change were the folks in West Virginia that operate and benefit from the annual New River Train fall excursions between Huntington and Hinton. Here are a few links to articles in the Huntington newspaper that describe their angst.

[http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/meeting-to-discuss-new-river-train-scheduled/article\\_acdd1b15-d833-55ee-b5d0-4f5a6727d450.html](http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/meeting-to-discuss-new-river-train-scheduled/article_acdd1b15-d833-55ee-b5d0-4f5a6727d450.html)

[http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/amtrak-urged-to-release-details-about-new-policy/article\\_9cd8bbe5-4d53-5553-9858-4b6c8becf62e.html](http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/amtrak-urged-to-release-details-about-new-policy/article_9cd8bbe5-4d53-5553-9858-4b6c8becf62e.html)

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