

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
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Railroading – Past, Present and Future

Volume 30 No. 10

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Pictured above is a scene from one of our past NCTM / WATV excursions.

OCTOBER 25 CHAPTER MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of Watauga Valley NRHS will be held Monday, October 25, 2010 at 6:30pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Mark your calendar so you will not miss this meeting. This will be the Chapter excursion safety meeting. We will go over all the general details of the trip along with the Amtrak Safety Rules. All excursion workers are required to attend. If you cannot make the meeting, call the Chapter office at [423-753-5797](tel:423-753-5797) and leave your name and phone number and Mike Tilley will call you back to schedule a make up session. If you have a long distance to drive, we will start the meeting promptly at 6:30 pm so you will get back home at a decent hour. You may also e-mail us at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com and we will get back with you on the make-up date and time.

Member Notes by Nancy Jewell

WELCOME to the Chapter's newest members: Davis and Angie Crabtree, Winston Salem, James and Madeline McCade, Jonesborough, and Steven Clark, Johnson City. We hope they all enjoy the events of the Chapter.

Please keep members and families and friends in your thoughts as they recover and cope with health issues - Mark and Joy Calhoun Foster, Jeanne Cope and Doug Zimmerman. Call the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918 to send any news that would help us keep in touch. Thanks.

Thank You from Doug Zimmerman

I just want to thank everyone that kept me and Gail in your thoughts and prayers during my by-pass surgery. Hope to be up and about by the November meeting. Thank you for the card. Hope the excursion is a success, Want to hear about it at the November meeting. Take care.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple

The Rolling Stock has rolled! After a week of last minute flurry, the cars left for Huntington, WV on October 6.

400 MOULTRIE DINING CAR - A test of the brake valves showed up a bad valve. The replacement valve didn't work either and was returned. A second replacement valve worked. Although the valves were supplied under warranties, it still cost us a lot of labor and freight.

500 CLINCHFIELD COACH – The A/C is functioning much better after an extensive cleaning of the condensing coils. We did not have time to rework the aisle lights.

Both cars passed the PC-1 inspection with only a few minor problems, most of which were fixed the day of the inspection.

539 POWHATAN ARROW COACH - The rework of the A/C systems and the heat controls has been completed. A last minute glitch in the control wiring mode selector was not found. Mode selector will be manual until we get the car back.

CRESCENT HARBOR – Interior painting is progressing. The lounge and corridors are finished. Focus now on the bedrooms and, when completed, the paint job will be done. Final inspection of the trucks rework 40 year passed with no exception. The under car generator mounting frames have been installed on the unit. The control contact or box for the generator auto-start is in place with conduit work to follow. Four windows have been removed for inspection and rework and possible replacement of rubber gasket. Eventually, all windows may be worked. The waste water tank is in final stages of fabrication.

Watauga Valley NRHS Election 2010

The following nominations for 2011 Chapter officers were made by the nominating committee and taken from the floor at the September Membership Meeting. The membership voted to close the nominations and the following will be presented to the membership on the ballot which will be mailed out in the coming days.

President	Mike Tilley	Board of Directors	(vote for three)
Vice President	(vote for one)		Bill Beagen
	Bob Schubel		Jim Calhoun
	Nick White		Helen Calhoun
Secretary	Harold Smitter		Jeanne Cope
Treasurer	Jeanie Walker		Randy Moore
National Director	Bob Yaple		
Historian	Gary Price		

[Ed. Note: Candidates that are running in opposition in the upcoming chapter elections have been asked to submit a position statement.]

BILL BEAGEN: CANDIDATE FOR BOARD MEMBER

I was appointed in January of 2009 to fill a position on the BOD when an active member passed away. As a member of the Mechanical crew, I knew what needed to be done and voiced my ideas and suggestions from my first Board meeting. As a member of the BOD, I am concerned about the long term success of the organization and ways to get our message out to the community. As a member of the Board, I championed the introduction of a sign at the corner of Spring Street and E. Main Street with our name and directions to the Yard. This will be supplemented by a larger sign at the Yard. I also suggested we replace our dial-up Internet and go to DSL for faster access, resulting in major reductions times it took to research hard to find parts for the restoration of the Crescent Harbor. I still feel there are items that need to be addressed and I wish to continue as part of the BOD to make sure this happens.

HELEN CALHOUN: CANDIDATE FOR BOARD MEMBER

I am running for a position on the Chapter's Board. I grew up in Erwin, TN (CLINCHFIELD country) and my roots are also tied to the railroad. I have been a member of the Chapter for many years, serving on the Board; newsletter committee; excursion committee; chairman of the dining car decoration committee; and the chairman of the Christmas dinner committee. I serve countless hours with my husband Jim in serving the Chapter. I feel Board members must be a working member instead of a rocking chair Board member. Board members should set an example to the general membership in trying to promote the Chapter and make it continue to grow each year. Anyone can say I want to get the title of Board of Director but not everyone is willing to put in the many hours it takes to contribute what is needed to get the job done. I promise you that Helen Calhoun will continue to work and make a Chapter that everyone is proud to be a member.

JIM CALHOUN: CANDIDATE FOR BOARD MEMBER

I am running for a position on the Chapter's Board. I have railroading in my blood since my daddy worked as engineer on the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD. Most of you that have been around a while know me. I have been a member for 25 years, working on all the Chapter's excursions and maintaining all the chapter passenger cars. I have been on the Board for 19 years, helping make the Chapter stronger every year. I have served on many committees, including arranging the chapter meeting locations; newsletter committee; Christmas dinner committee; a 24 year member of the mechanical committee; supply committee; and the excursion committee. My wife Helen, who is also running, and myself spend many hours a week serving the Watauga Valley Chapter. I want to ask for your support and vote for the position of Board of Director. My goal is to make the Chapter stronger each year. I will continue to make this happen if elected to the Board.

JEANNE (JEAN) COPE: CANDIDATE FOR BOARD MEMBER

Jeanne Cope is a longtime working member of the Watauga Valley Chapter with proven dedication to the Chapter. **Highlights include:** Organized and managed "Storytelling on the Diner" Chapter fund raiser working closely with Mike Tilley and Chapter Members resulting in a smooth and successful event; Coordinated tours of the diner by the Junior League of Johnson City; Assists with Chapter dinners and decorations; Helps with clean up when needed. Works as car host and tour guide. **TALENTS:** Jeanne brings a joyful personality; expert planning experience; competent thinking; gets along with varied personalities; competent and logical thinker; University degree in Communications and Finance; dependable leadership ability; trained and certified court mediator; competent and effective; Writes for three newspapers. Jeanne Cope is a proven team player! Please honor me with your vote to the Watauga Chapter Board.

RANDY MOORE: CANDIDATE FOR BOARD MEMBER

I'm Randy Moore from Meadowview, VA and have been a member of the chapter since 1994. I've been nominated for Board Member and am honored by this. If you choose to elect me, I'll do my best to further the chapter's interests. I've been a car rider much my time in the chapter and always felt whoever traveled with our equipment should be a director, so there's a chapter official with it. I have a BS in Accounting and Public Administration from UVa's Clinch Valley College. I come from a family with a railroad heritage. I operate some farms in Meadowview. Our chapter has several purposes; from preserving historic equipment to educating the public to promoting passenger trains to being an instrument of good fellowship. But the thing that our chapter has always been about mostly is operating excursions. That's how and why many of us joined the chapter. Also, it's our primary fund raising activity. So that and keeping our cars in good running order is first priority to the chapter's success. Thank you.

BOB SCHUBEL: CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT

Bob Schubel is a 20 year veteran of the Watauga Valley Chapter. He has been a very active and enthusiastic member at meetings and all WATV functions during that time span. Some highlights of his activity have included participation in every excursion and in several roles such as car host, dining car waiter, concession car worker, [continued on next page]

publicity agent. He has assisted the chapter president in behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts, provided out of state transportation for pre-excursion planning for numerous members in advance of several excursions at no cost to the chapter and generally assisted chapter members and the president at numerous times. Bob is anxious to continue these efforts, to assist in sponsoring new members, promoting growth and development of the chapter and assisting where and as needed in chapter functions. His background includes extensive sales, sales training and management from over 40 years in real estate, industrial loss control and industrial safety, human resources training and application. He considers his activity in the Watauga Valley Chapter to be his most important work.

NICK WHITE: CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT

My name is Nick White and I currently serve on the Board of Directors. I also perform the duties of Membership Recruitment and Publicity. I am announcing my candidacy for the position of Vice President and am asking for your support in the upcoming election for the year 2011. During my time with the Chapter on the Board of Directors, I have worked hard to increase Awareness and Membership. The following are examples of my work and service to the Chapter: helped put together a new website; began advertising our membership meetings in the local newspapers and the internet to attract new members; started more membership outings coordinated with Gary Price to increase membership activity along with recruiting new members; member of the Bylaws Committee during the current revision looking out for the best interest of our organization and its members; participated in excursions; served as a Safety Director on board the fall excursions; and have advocated an Open Door Policy. Thank You for Your Time and Consideration.

“Back to Roanoke”

By Gary Price

A few columns back I wrote about working in Roanoke but eventually ended up heading into North Carolina. Now it was time to head back to Roanoke. This is odd for us to visit the same place twice on two different jobs, but I was glad to be back working in Roanoke once again.

On Monday morning, the flat cars that were hauling our equipment were spotted near the hump yard tower in NORFOLK SOUTHERN's classification yard in Roanoke, and we began unchaining our equipment and rolling them down the ramp to position them in place to begin work. We then had to maneuver through the maze of switches and start heading backwards east to Vinton to begin the job. We would be replacing ties on the main 2 track from one end of Roanoke yard to the other.

We broke ground on the main 2 track at MP N255.7 and started working westward into the heart of downtown Roanoke and the yard located there. Of [continued on next page]

interest to our Chapter, the gang re-tied the crossover switches at MP N257. These are the switches that our excursion train will use to gain access to the coach yard track and platform upon entry and unloading of our passengers in Roanoke.

While working by the Virginia Museum of Transportation, we paused to re-tie the main 2 crossover switches located there. Several people visiting the museum took photos of my gang hard at work and several photos ended up on the VMT Facebook page. You can see me in several shots. There is even a photo of me operating my machine NS AS 88568. I thought how ironic: they had a photo of me on their page, and I know for a fact that I am the only one in the bunch who really cares about what goes on behind the fence at the museum. You can visit their photo album by becoming a fan of their page on Facebook. (By the way, speaking of Facebook, our chapter's Facebook page now has 115 fans, and we picked up our first members because of our page. If you haven't joined, please do. There are a lot of great photos to enjoy, and information is updated as soon as I get it.) We finished up the yard job safely at the WB signal located at the western limits of Roanoke yard MP N263. We then prepared to tackle the mountain. [Next month: Up Christiansburg Mountain]

In the News

The National Gateway announces the launch of an updated website

[The following is a press release from The National Gateway]

Washington, D.C. – October 4, 2010 – The National Gateway coalition today announced the launch of an updated website, www.nationalgateway.org. The updated website streamlines access to project information and features updated state-by-state benefit information.

The updated National Gateway website is part of an expanded online presence that includes a dedicated National Gateway Facebook page and Twitter feed. Visitors to the website are encouraged to comment on projects and submit letters of support for this exciting initiative

The National Gateway is a groundbreaking public-private partnership that will upgrade tracks, equipment and facilities to provide clearance for double stack intermodal trains, creating significant national environmental and efficiency benefits. Double stack trains can carry twice as much cargo as single stack trains, enabling the National Gateway to improve the flow of freight through ports and between eastern and western rail networks

The National Gateway is an \$842 million investment in America's intermodal transportation infrastructure that will create more than 50,000 jobs in its first 30 years of operation, with more than 10,000 jobs being created during the construction phase alone

To learn more about the National Gateway, visit www.nationalgateway.org. Be sure to follow us on Twitter (http://twitter.com/Nat_Gateway) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/NationalGateway).

CSX and NS Horsepower

Jeffrey Jones came across postings on the JREB.org forum regarding CSX downrating and NS uprating horsepower in some of their units. The Rumor Mill has CSX downrating their C44-8Ws, C44-9Ws, and the new ES44DCs to 4000 hp. Appearing on that site and on Facebook is the news that NS is upgrading / uprating several Dash-9s from 4000 hp to 4400 hp. They are to be assigned to UPS trains between Chicago and the East Coast. It is unknown if they will be stenciled showing their new 4400 hp rating. [Editor's Note: Readers are cautioned that this information comes from social networking sites.]

AMTRAK ENVISIONS WORLD CLASS HIGH-SPEED RAIL

[The following is a press release from AMTRAK]

PHILADELPHIA – A Next-Generation High-Speed Rail service could be successfully developed in the Northeast with trains operating up to 220 mph (354 kph) on a new two-track corridor resulting in a trip time of about three hours between Washington and Boston cutting in half or better the current schedules, according to a concept plan released today by Amtrak. At an average speed of 137 mph (220 kph), a trip between Washington and New York would take just 96 minutes, about one hour faster than today. For the trip between New York and Boston, the average speed would be 148 mph (238 kph) and take just 84 minutes, or a time savings of more than two hours.

“Amtrak is putting forward a bold vision of a realistic and attainable future that can revolutionize transportation, travel patterns and economic development in the Northeast for generations,” said President and CEO Joseph Boardman.

The Amtrak concept plan, *A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor (NEC)*, shows a financially viable route could be developed. Upon its full build-out in 2040, high-speed train ridership would approach 18 million passengers with room to accommodate up to 80 million annually as demand increases in the years and decades that follow. Departures of high-speed trains would expand from an average of one to four per hour in each direction, with additional service in the peak periods, and total daily high-speed rail departures would increase from 42 today to as many as 148 in 2040.

The service would generate an annual operating surplus of approximately \$900 million and its construction would create more than 40,000 full-time jobs annually over a 25-year construction period to build the new track, tunnels, bridges, stations, and other infrastructure.

More than 120,000 permanent jobs in improved economic productivity along the corridor and in rail operations are predicted by 2040.

In addition to significant travel time savings between major cities, tremendous mobility improvements would come with environmental, energy and congestion mitigation benefits. The new transportation capacity obtained with this investment will allow a larger share of the intercity travel market to be via high-speed rail, strengthening sustainable, energy-efficient development in the corridor's metropolitan areas. [Continued on next page]

“Amtrak’s plan to modernize the Northeast Corridor and make it a truly high speed rail line is the type of innovative thinking we need to get cars off the road, decrease pollution and put people to work improving America’s infrastructure,” stated Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.). “I applaud the plan and pledge to work with Amtrak to improve the Northeast Corridor and make America a leader in high speed rail.”

“Amtrak’s High Speed Rail plan will create jobs, cut pollution and help us move towards a modern and reliable transportation system network in the Northeast,” said Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.). “As countries around the world continue to build out their transportation systems, we cannot afford to fall further behind. This is an important down payment on the massive commitment necessary to bridge our infrastructure gap.”

With an investment of \$4.7 billion annually over 25 years, a major national transportation asset would be built to support the growth and competitive position of the Northeast region. Its population, economic densities and growing intercity travel demand make it one of the premier “mega-regions” of the world, and an ideal market for world-class high-speed passenger rail service.

“The results show the concept of a world-class high-speed rail service would help relieve congestion across all modes of transportation, spur jobs creation and economic productivity, reduce carbon emissions and improve the quality of the environment,” said Al Engel, incoming Amtrak Vice President for High-Speed Rail.

The specific high-speed alignment, stations, maintenance yards and other facilities that were analyzed in the report represent only one of a wide range of possible network and service configurations that could be developed. The analyzed concepts reflect the study’s underlying goals (i.e., aggressive travel time savings, station locations in downtown areas) and detailed preliminary planning and engineering assessments. These concepts would undergo numerous revisions, refinements and changes under more detailed study, and other concepts with different alignments would likely be further reviewed at that time.

As America’s intercity passenger rail service provider and its only high-speed rail operator, Amtrak has a vital, leading and necessary role to play in expanding and operating high-speed rail service. Just as leading countries throughout Europe and Asia are expanding existing high-speed rail networks and developing new systems, Next-Generation High-Speed Rail must be part of a balanced transportation future in major travel corridors across the U.S.

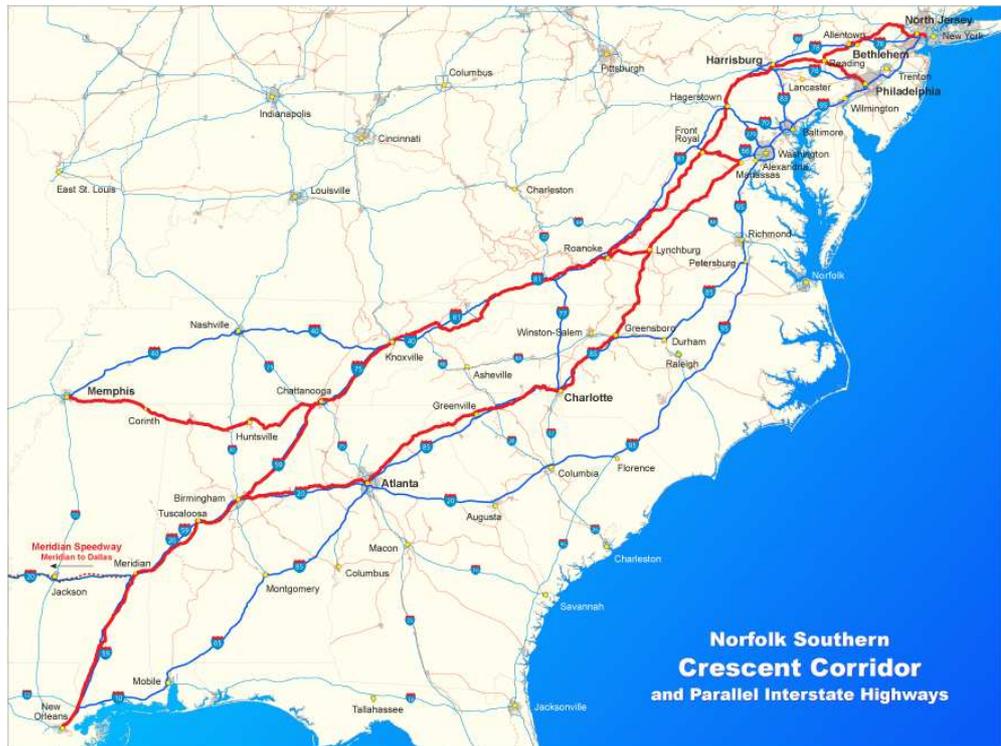
An *NEC Infrastructure Master Plan* issued earlier this year predicted that the capacity gains achieved within the current NEC “footprint” would be maxed out by 2030. The Next-Generation High-Speed Rail system will provide the necessary new capacity to meet growing demand well beyond 2030. By operating the highest-speed trains on the new infrastructure, capacity on the existing NEC would become available for additional commuter and conventional intercity passenger trains as well as for freight operations.

NS Heartland and Crescent Corridors



Last month's Whistle Stop featured an article on NORFOLK SOUTHERN's Heartland Corridor. Your Editor was remiss in adding an illustrative route map, which is now offered.

Of equal interest to Chapter members is the NS Crescent Corridor (an expansion program under development supporting intermodal traffic) passing our Spring Street Coach Yard. From NS: "The Crescent Corridor is an existing 2,500-mile rail network through 13 states from Louisiana to New Jersey that touches 26 percent of the nation's population and 30 percent of the nation's manufacturing output." Depending on finances, this corridor could be operational as early as 2013.



Louisiana to New Jersey that touches 26 percent of the nation's population and 30 percent of the nation's manufacturing output." Depending on finances, this corridor could be operational as early as 2013.

[Both maps are credited to NORFOLK SOUTHERN.]

NS Excursions out of Roanoke ...

After a weekend of hard work on our own excursions, here's an opportunity to sit back, relax, and enjoy a terrific train trip and scenery. Roanoke NRHS is offering two excursions over NORFOLK SOUTHERN. The first, on Saturday, November 6, follows the ex-SOUTHERN main line from Roanoke to Danville, VA and return. The second, tracing the route of the NORFOLK & WESTERN, features a round-trip between Roanoke and Bluefield, WV. For more information, go to <http://roanokenrhs.org/excursions.html>.

EAST TENNESSEE RAILWAY news ...

The Johnson City Press reported that no action was taken by the East Tennessee Railway Authority on a proposal by a group of entrepreneurs to restore rail service to Elizabethton over what may soon become the ex-EAST TENNESSEE RAILWAY. The group was soliciting Carter County financial backing. Elizabethton City Manager Fred Edens is opposed to the idea, expressing these opinions: (1.) "If the line was profitable, Genesee and Wyoming would not be selling it"; (2.) "I think the private sector and government should stay apart as much as possible"; and (3.) Acquisition of the rail line would be a large burden on the city." Ongoing negotiations by an investor to acquire the former Alcoa Aluminum plant on State Line Road offers a potential new customer for rail service, although Carter County officials state that lack of rail service would not be a deal breaker.

Despite the position noted above, as of October 12, 2010, the ETRA is on record as opposing the line's abandonment. In a letter addressed to the federal Surface Transportation Board, the Authority said that "the [ETRA] fully supports the National Trail System Act's Rail Banking Program which allows railroad rights of way approved for abandonment to be preserved for the future restoration of rail service while allowing them to be used in the interim as recreational trails." However, the ETRA "does not support action that places responsibility for maintenance of the right of way or liability on the authority, the city of Elizabethton or the city of Johnson City or action that does not protect the right of way for future rail service."

NRHS Telegraph correction ...

Please take note that the NRHS Telegraph made a mistake and put that several positions were vacant. All positions are filled. We are sorry that this mistake was made in the NRHS Telegraph. We had some changes but the positions are as follows:

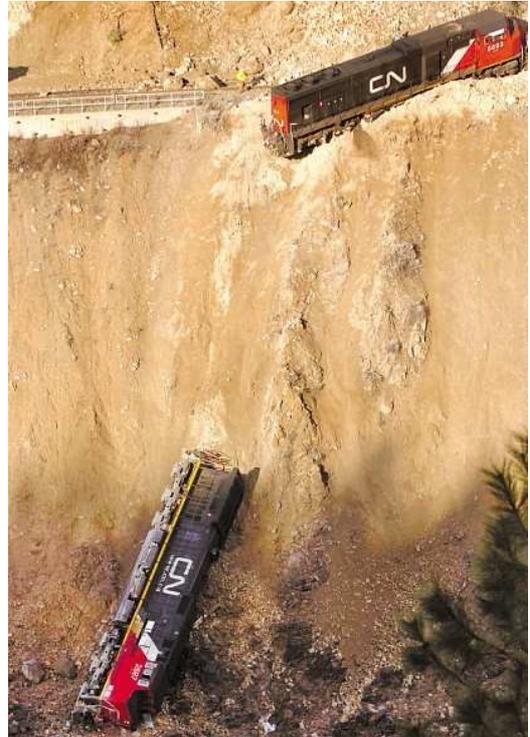
MIKE TILLEY - PRESIDENT
BOB SCHUBEL - VICE PRESIDENT
NANCY JEWELL - SECRETARY
TREASURER - JEANIE WALKER
HISTORIAN - GARY PRICE
EDITOR - FRED WASKIEWICZ
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN - SUZIE PRICE



Photo Section



Skip Banner sends along this photo circulating the railfan community of a January 2007 derailment along CN's Ashcroft Subdivision. The engineer and conductor were in the lead unit of the 105-car freight train when it hit a landslide covering the tracks around 1 am in the morning and plunged down the steep embankment into the Thompson River Canyon below. Miraculously, despite being pitched about the cab, neither man was injured seriously, thanks to Lady Luck and some quick thinking by the engineer who was able to cut off the main power switch. (His concern was electrocution if the engine rolled into the river.) After a wild "ride" down the embankment, both crew members crawled out of the cab and away from falling rocks and the other locomotive balanced precariously above them. However, they could not climb out of the canyon due to the steepness of its walls and had to wait until daylight to be rescued. Although this story isn't related to regional interest, it is offered as a reminder that, even in the 21st century, railroading is still a very dangerous business. Quoting the engineer: "The best part is we both walked out and we didn't lose any limbs." You'd have to agree that the best part is that they walked out and were not carried out.



Musical railroads ... Gary Price submitted these two photos of "foreign" motive power on NS rails. The photo at left finds CSX ES44ACs #899 and #920 leading an empty NS hopper train into Roanoke, VA. The photo at right captures BNSF SD70MAC #9629 in "executive paint scheme" at the point of a grain train passing under I-81 on Christiansburg Mountain.



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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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