



Club News

By the time you read this, we will have participated in two shows. Our first one this month was the Greenberg Show at Mt. Vernon High School on the 3rd and 4th of October. The second show was at the Mid-East Regional NMRA event on 16 and 17 Oct.

As a bonus for the Club members working the MER, Obie's Trains of Alexandria donated a set of covered hoppers and a complete Santa Fe Passenger set with engine as drawing prizes at the end of the show. Thanks Obie! That's a great way to keep the members around for disassembly and cleanup. Bernie Kempinski won the covered hoppers and Leonard White collected the Santa Fe set.

The Rockville Lions Club show will be on the 14th and 15th of November. Be sure that you let Matt know if you can attend. We did this show last year and it was quite fun. We'll share the Lunch Room with the Loco Doctor as we did last year. Check the show schedule later in the newsletter for the setup and operation times. The Lions Club may be providing Show participants with free coffee and doughnuts during setup!

It appears that the three radio headsets are not enough for a show. We need enough to cover all four corners of the layout as well as walking the ropes with the audience. We'll discuss this at our November 4th business meeting.

We've received several invitations to setup. Matt Schaefer would like to get a count of how many want to setup at the Audubon Naturalist Society Holiday Fair on December 4-6 in Chevy Chase. Yes, they do want model railroad layouts! This is a 23 year tradition for holiday gift shopping and nature-oriented crafts. Let Matt know if you are interested. We may or may not receive a donation, but if you are really into more shows, here's your chance!

Everyone is reminded that if you plan to attend the monthly setup, please call the Club Coordinator Matt Schaefer (703-78-2946) by the Wednesday preceding the setup. Matt needs to know who will be there to plan the module arrangement. We need this information to speed up the assembly.

Matt reminds everyone that with the flyover module we should be signing up and starting more runs. Also, let's build up our fleet of trains - particularly colorful passenger and freights, double-headed steam, and merged lines diesel lashups (e.g., C&O, B&O, WM, Clinchfield).

Future events include the Dixie Division of the NMRA Mini Convention in March 1993 and a proposed Tri-Division meet in Richmond late in April 1993.

Holiday Party: At the November business meeting we will discuss when and where we will hold our December holiday party this year. If anyone wants to volunteer his home or has access to a homeowner's association club house, let one of the Club officers know.

Business Meeting: There will be a Club business meeting at Obie's Trains on 4 Nov from 7:00PM-9:00PM to discuss Club By-Laws. Please be there. We need as many members present as possible to ensure that decisions made are acceptable to the majority of members.

Contest!!!

We are having a contest to create an official Club logo which will be used on membership cards, stationery, and Club literature. We have a de facto logo created by Dennis Austin which is displayed at the top of this newsletter. We want to get the Club members' opinion on the logo. Does someone have another suggestion? Any new logo ideas you have should be sent to the Club Secretary at Northern Virginia N-Trak, P.O. Box 1951, Herndon, VA 22070. We need all ideas by November 1st. The candidates will be presented at the December business meeting/holiday party and voted upon. The creator of the winning logo will receive a prize.

Other N-Trak News

For those of you who are not aware, there is a national NTRAK organization. A bi-monthly newsletter is published with lots of info on N-Scale activities. There are also NTRAK resource booklets covering everything from module construction to throttles. You can join by sending \$5.00 to: NTRAK Publishing, 2424 Alturas Rd., Atascadero, CA 93422, (805)466-1758. Jim FitzGerald runs the organization and handles the newsletter.

Rail Fan News

The Pocahontas Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is hosting the '92 Railfest at the Bluefield Youth Center, 1780 Stadium Drive (next to Mitchell Stadium in Bluefield, WV) on November 14 and 15. Hours are 9AM - 6PM Saturday and 12Noon-6PM on Sunday. Admission is \$2 per person, \$5 per family. For more info call (304)327-0026 or (304)487-3128

Meeting Reminders

Shows & Meetings:

Nov 4 November business meeting at Obie's Trains in Alexandria (off Edsall Rd behind the Quality Inn)

Nov 14-15 Rockville Lions Club, Rockville Senior Center:

Fri, 13th, Setup 6PM - 9PM

Sat, 14th, Setup 8AM - 10AM;

Show 10AM - 4PM; Closeup 4PM - 5PM

Sun, 15th, Open 10AM - 12Noon;

Show 12Noon - 4PM; Tear down 4PM - 6PM

Directions: The Rockville Senior Center is located at 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville, MD 20850. Take I-270 to Rt. 28 (West Montgomery Ave.) and stay to the left of the exit. Cross 28 onto Nelson St., follow the S-curve and take second left onto Crocus Dr. Crocus ends at a T-intersection, turn left onto Carnation.

Local History (the W&OD)

Not many of us are aware of the railroad history of the Northern Virginia area. We thought Club members might enjoy an opportunity to take a peek at our home region and its railroads. Though many of us model other parts of the country, it is always enlightening to have an understanding of our own local heritage. This month we present the first of a two-part article on the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad. This often ignored short line played an important role in the development of Northern Virginia and, in fact, just missed the boat (or should I say train?) in providing for the future needs of commuters.

The story of the W&OD begins in 1847 when the Alexandria and Harper's

Ferry Railroad Company was incorporated with the purpose of providing the city of Alexandria access to the business opportunities in the Ohio River Valley. The A&HFRC was also given authorization to merge with the already extant Winchester and Potomac Railroad in the Shenandoah Valley. Several years passed without commencement of construction. Businessmen were more interested in two other Northern Virginia railroads -- the Orange and Alexandria and the Manassas Gap Railroad Companies. In 1848 the B&O railroad established a junction with the Winchester and Potomac at Harper's Ferry, further withering interest in the A&HFRC.

In 1853, the owners of the A&HFRC received an amended charter from the Virginia General Assembly allowing them to rename the railroad to the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad Company (AL&H). At this time the route of the new railroad was outlined to run as near as possible to Leesburg, pass through Clarke's Gap, and cross the Blue Ridge Mountains through Bloomery Gap of Cacapon to Paddytown, Hampshire County (Keyser, Mineral County, West Virginia since 1866); or connect with any railroad extending to the vicinity of Paddytown and the coal fields to the west. The AL&H was expressly forbidden to connect its tracks or interchange traffic with the B&O at any point east of Cumberland, Maryland.

Alternate routes were considered, and finally a route along Four Mile Run and out to Loudoun County at Bluemont, known as Snicker's Gap, was selected. At the time, the road was in financial trouble. They were helped when the Board of Public Works of the Commonwealth of Virginia purchased sixty percent of the stock. By September 1859, track was extended from Alexandria to Herndon. It reached Leesburg in May, 1860.

During this time, the railroad attempted to acquire a Washington connection, but was preempted by the Alexandria and Washington Railroad. Other efforts to gain direct access to Washington failed and the Civil War terminated all plans for expansion. Opposition to the Washington branch was mostly from retail merchants in Alexandria who

feared their quality of life would be destroyed (an early example of NIMBYs, Not In My BackYard).

In January 1861 two daily trains operated between Alexandria and Leesburg. The first locomotives owned by the AL&H were three 4-4-0's from the William Mason Works in Taunton, Massachusetts. Passenger cars were constructed by John Summers on Pitt Street in Alexandria.

The AL&H also ran mail between Alexandria and Leesburg with a stage coach from Leesburg to Winchester. In March 1861 four daily trains were running between Alexandria and Leesburg. Unfortunately, on April 17, 1861 Virginia seceded and construction halted. On May 24, Federal troops entered Alexandria and seized all railroad facilities. Confederate troops destroyed much of the western portions. The only operable section was between Alexandria and Vienna, which was used by Federal troops to supply the first and second Bull Run campaigns. The AL&H was not returned to its owners until June 8, 1865, at which time reconstruction was begun. By July 1866, daily service was restored just beyond Herndon. It wasn't until June 1, 1867 that service was restored to Leesburg.

In 1868, facilities and stations were expanded. Both Herndon and Leesburg received turntables. By October 1868, rail was extended to Clarke's Gap, highest point on the road (635 ft above sea level).

The AL&H directors purchased back Virginia's interest in the railroad in 1870 and began looking toward western extensions. They authorized the railroad to extend to any point or points permitted by the legislatures of West Virginia or Maryland. In February, West Virginia authorized the AL&H to extend westward to the west bank of the Ohio River at any point between the junction of that river with the Little Kanawha and the Big Sandy Rivers. They were also authorized to connect with the C&O and B&O railroads in Mineral County or near Piedmont. At the same time, AL&H changed its name to the Washington and Ohio Railroad Company.

The westward extension reached Hamilton in 1870. It arrived at Purcellville on April 1, 1874 and at Round

Hill on December 8 of the same year. Grading was begun on the Winchester extension, but heavy rock at Scotland Gap stopped construction. In February, 1878, the AL&H went bankrupt and sold to a new corporation called the Washington and Western Railroad Company. The W&WRC defaulted on its bonds in 1883 and was sold to another new corporation named the Washington, Ohio, and Western Railroad Company (WO&W).

The Richmond and Danville Railroad leased the WO&W on October 30, 1886. The Richmond and Danville Railroad majority interest was held by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The acquisition was a strategic move by the R&DR to prevent competition. Therefore, they terminated the WO&W westward extension plans. Soon after, the Richmond and West Point Terminal Railway and Warehouse Company, a holding company controlled by the Richmond and Danville purchased the entire capital stock of the WO&W. When the Richmond and Danville defaulted on its mortgage in 1894, the lease of the WO&W transferred to the newly formed Southern Railway Company. The Southern was created to clean up the foreclosure. It began operation on July 1, 1894 and ran the WO&W as an integral part of its system until July 1, 1912. On that day, a newly organized Washington and Old Dominion Railway Company (W&OD) took over operation of the WO&W from the Southern Railway.

In our next installment, we'll learn about the W&OD in the 20th century and what happened to it in the sixties.

(Material for this article was taken from the book Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, 1847-1968, written by Ames W. Williams and published by the Arlington Historical Society in 1989.)

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Deadline for article and announcement submissions for newsletter is the 15th of the preceding month. Newsletter is mailed last week of the preceding month.