

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS

POTOMAC CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-0235

JULY 2017



NRHS CONVENTION SPECIAL! Ex-Southern Railway locomotive, 2-8-2 No. 4501 is shown here on June 21, 2017, ringing its bell as it exits 979-foot Missionary Ridge Tunnel, which opened in 1858, leading the first convention excursion from Chattanooga, TN, to Summerville, GA. See page 2 for details. Photo by: Alex Mayes

PROGRAM: The 20th Century Limited - A commercially produced documentary covering the history of New York Central's legendary passenger train will be presented by Carl Franz. See page 2 for details.

MEETING: July 18, 2017. 8PM. Lobby Level Auditorium of the Montgomery County Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD.

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 15, 2017

DEADLINE FOR AUGUST ISSUE: July 21, 2017. Send news items to Clay Moritz, Editor, Potomac Rail News, at c.moritz@comcast.net

INFO ON CHAPTER ACTIVITIES: <http://potomacnrhs.org/>

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THE CHAPTER FAMILY

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, has lost a loved one, or has a new birth in the family, please call the Chapter on (301) 251-9461.

COVER PHOTO. Teresa and I drove to Chattanooga from Nashville, the Convention headquarters, to chase the steam special all the way to Summerville, GA. The first event of the convention was a double-headed steam excursion from Chattanooga, TN, to Summerville, GA, on the former Central of Georgia main, 46 miles one-way on June 21, 2017. The trip was operated by the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum (TVRM); the train was powered by two ex-Southern Railway engines, 2-8-2 No. 4501 and 2-8-0 No. 630. Passengers were bused from Nashville to Chattanooga. The first shot was at 979-foot Missionary Ridge Tunnel, which opened in 1858. -- Alex Mayes

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM. Carl Franz will present a DVD covering the history of the 20th Century Limited. This was New York Central's legendary passenger train that linked New York and Chicago. The 20th Century Limited was launched in 1902 during the "the age of civilized travel" and quickly took its place as the most important train on "the Water Level Route." Narrated by actor and railfan Michael Gross, the DVD includes recollections from people who worked aboard or rode this famous train. Many scenes of the Century powered by steam, electric and diesel power are included.

ANNUAL POTOMAC CHAPTER PICNIC - MAKE YOUR RESERVATION. Our annual Chapter picnic will be held again this year jointly with the Baltimore Chapter, NRHS, at the Baltimore Streetcar Museum 1901 Falls Road Baltimore MD on August 12, 2017, from 5-8PM. The minimum cost is \$15 per adult; \$8 per child. Additional cash contributions towards the general picnic expenses are welcome as well as contributions of chips, salads, cakes, desserts, etc. to share are also welcome. Deadline for reservations is August 5, 2017. Members and guests attending will have an opportunity to sign-up to operate one of the streetcars in operation during the picnic. **A banquet reservation form is enclosed.** Check out the Museum at <http://www.baltimorestreetcar.org/index.html> 410-547-0264

IN MEMORIAM. With sadness we note the passing of Marianna (Mia) Mather, 76, of New York City and Vinalhaven, Maine, who passed away unexpectedly on June 12, 2017 of complication following surgery. Despite being born with very poor vision, Mia was never one to miss an adventure, especially if it involved riding a train almost anywhere in the world. She is remembered for her humor, compassion, and the joy she found in even the smallest of things. The Potomac Chapter extends its Deepest Sympathy to Mia's family and friends. You are in our Thoughts and Prayers. Donations in her memory may be made to Vinalhaven Eldercare Services, 18 Beaver Dam Rd, Vinalhaven, ME 04863 (www.vinalhaveneldercare.org) or the National Railway Historical Society c/o John K Fiorilla, Esq, Capehart &



Scatchard PA, P.O. Box 5016. Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054 (www.nrhs.com/giving) (New York Times Text and Photo)

A check of the internet found Mia remembered in multiple posts on www.Trainorders.com, one of which I am sharing, in part, below:

I was deeply saddened to read the note of Mia Mather's passing. My sincere condolences to her family and friends.

I had briefly met Mia on several steam excursions in the late 1980s. I found it to be so interesting that she would travel from her home in New York City to the Midwest to ride on various Southern and NS weekend steam excursions. She clearly enjoyed every one of them, and gradually became a familiar face. If it was a St. Louis Chapter NRHS excursion, I was usually on the trip operating committee and so never really had an opportunity to talk at any length with this interesting and friendly lady from New York City. But I would recognize her, say hello, and ask how she was enjoying the trip. These meet-and-greets were not while she was comfortably seated in an air-conditioned coach, oh no. It was while she was standing at a Dutch door in a vestibule, or by the open side door of the baggage car or combine. Soaking in the sights, sounds (and smoke and cinders), just like all of the guys.

My slight acquaintance changed when I served as co-chairman for rail events of the 1990 NRHS Convention in St. Louis. Mia was a member of the national convention planning committee, along with Carl Jensen of NS, John Wilson of Boston (who became a good friend) and others. Through the whole planning process and a number of meetings, I got to know her better. She would ask penetrating questions about plans and their execution, a reflection of her statistical analysis work in New York. And she was always a welcome voice of counsel and particularly moderation when it was needed. Planning for events like that, or any steam excursion for that matter, can get to be a bit intense. Her calm and practical reminders to keep plans realistic, to not overdo things, to make sure that guests always had the time and space to enjoy and savor the experience were always a welcome contribution. She was right. She knew what those moments in an open vestibule meant.

For two years following the St. Louis convention, I served with her as a member of the national convention planning committee assisting the local chapters planning the Huntington and San Jose conventions. It was always a treat to be with her at meetings, and to see that calm, analytical yet supportive style in action. It was also a time to get to know her better socially at various dinners and lunches, and on trips. A great conversationalist, her smile and infectious laugh would light up any gathering like a neon sign.

A couple of meetings after my time on the convention committee ended were especially memorable. The first was on board the final public NS steam excursion with the 611 from Birmingham to Chattanooga and return, on December 3, 1994. After the train had been turned in Chattanooga and we headed back to Birmingham, the weather (which had been showery off and on all day) turned to a chilly, steady rain, with most of the trip in darkness. Most passengers abandoned the vestibules and the open baggage car doors for a dry, warm, comfy seat in one of the cars. Not Mia. She donned the rain gear and goggles, and stood right there next to the open baggage car door or in an open vestibule, soaking up all of the final moments and memories of the long, distinguished heritage of the Southern and NS steam programs. I recall standing with her for a long while in one open vestibule, taking it all in. The crew ran the 611 beautifully and memorably that rainy evening, the sounds of the engine and whistle echoing through the rainy northeast Alabama valleys and villages, lights twinkling in yards and homes here and there for the approaching holiday season. We said not a word to each other the whole time. No words needed to be spoken. She knew that we were all unique witnesses to the passing of history that evening. At times like that you listen,

watch, savor and remember. She knew.

...That it's well past midnight (writing this and waiting for a long data run to finish), and I have a full day at work tomorrow matters not. We knew each other really only slightly by comparison to her professional colleagues, her family, her friends. There are surely many people from her life in New York who will remember her and cherish her memory in ways that make these reminiscences small by comparison.

But it was special indeed to know this marvelous woman from New York City who was, like all of us on this board, a full-fledged member of a unique and special fraternity. Those who love trains and train travel. And especially, those who love steam. That is something special and unique that one must memorialize, remember, and cherish.

This weekend the Nickel Plate 765 will run four excursions on the former Rock Island between Joliet and Chicago. An engine she knew and rode behind. And one of the most quintessentially New York cars will bring up the markers, ex-NYC observation "Hickory Creek." I'll be one of a number of us, I'm sure, who will be thinking of her as I photograph the train, and ride it as well (I'll be on the Sunday morning trip). She'll surely be there in spirit, her laughter and wit at the ready in "Hickory Creek's" lounge over drinks. And right at one of those open dutch doors, soaking in all of the sights and sounds. Steam, smoke, cinders and all.

To her family, friends and colleagues, sincerest condolences and heartfelt prayers. Thank you for sharing her life with us.

May you be in God's peace, Mia. --- MC Muskegon, Michigan

RAIL NEWS

AMTRAK NAMES NEW PRESIDENT. On June 26th Amtrak announced that it has named Richard Anderson, a 25-year veteran of the aviation industry, as its next President and Chief Executive Officer. Anderson, former CEO of both Delta and Northwest Airlines, will begin his role on July 12. To ensure a smooth transition, Anderson will serve in a co-CEO capacity with current CEO Wick Moorman through December 31, 2017, at which time Moorman will become an advisor to the company. Moorman joined Amtrak in September 2016 as a transitional CEO tasked with improving the company's operations, streamlining the organizational structure, and helping recruit his successor.

"Richard brings to Amtrak his experience running one of the largest global commercial air carriers. The Board believes he is the right leader at the right time to drive the quality of customer service that our passengers, partners and stakeholders expect and deserve while continuing our path towards operational and financial excellence," said Amtrak Chairman of the Board Tony Coscia. "The Board also appreciates all that Wick continues to do to improve Amtrak's safety culture and strengthen our operating performance, including the important renewal work at New York Penn Station."

Anderson, 62, most recently was Executive Chairman of the Delta Air Lines Board of Directors after serving as the airline's CEO from 2007 to 2016. He was Executive Vice President at United Healthcare from 2004 to 2007 and CEO of Northwest Airlines from 2001 to 2004, which later merged with Delta. Anderson also served in the legal division at Continental Airlines and was a former county prosecutor.

"Richard is a best-in-class industry leader and isn't afraid to face challenges head-on. He has helped companies navigate bankruptcy, a recession, mergers and acquisitions, and 9/11," said Moorman. "He's a leader with the strategic vision and tactical experience necessary to run a railroad that benefits our customers, partners and stakeholders nationwide."

Anderson earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City and a Juris Doctorate at South Texas College of Law. He is a native of Galveston, TX, where his father worked for the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. (Amtrak Press Release)

AMTRAK PROMOTES SAFETY AROUND RAILROAD CROSSINGS AND TRACKS. Amtrak is raising awareness about safety in an effort to reduce injuries and fatalities resulting from unsafe behavior by motorists and pedestrians on railroad crossings and tracks as the summer season gets underway. Vehicle-train collisions at highway-rail grade crossings fell 2.4% in 2016, according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The number of people killed in these incidents rose 13.7% last year, and deaths due to train track trespassing increased 12.8%. Total trespass-related casualties increased 14.5% from 2015 levels, according to FRA.



Amtrak is one of several partners with Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI). OLI has programs in 46 states, and trained volunteers who provide free safety presentations to community groups, school bus operators, truckers, and student drivers to raise awareness of the dangers around railroad tracks and trains. OLI uses materials from their national public awareness campaign, "See Tracks? Think Train!" to connect with the public through digital ads and at events.

Here are eight Rail Safety Tips: 1) Report an emergency; A toll-free number is posted on every grade crossing for the public to contact a railroad to report problems. 2) Avoid walking, biking, or jogging on a railroad track. 3) Remember to always stop at railroad crossings. 4) Obey all warning signs and signals; Trains can come from either direction on the same track at any time and can be very quiet. 5) Use of headsets or cell phones around tracks can prevent a person from hearing an approaching train. 6) Trains are wider than the tracks; If a person gets too close, they can be hit by or dragged under the train. 7) Never drive around lowered gates – it's illegal and deadly; There are also substantial fines for going around the crossing arms. 8) Report suspicious items, persons, or activity immediately to the Amtrak Police Department by approaching a uniformed officer, calling (800) 331-0008, sending a text to APD11 (27311), or by calling 911. (Amtrak Press Release and photo)

CSX CREW MEMBERS STRUCK AND KILLED BY AMTRAK TRAIN. Two CSX crew members, a 20 year-old from Meyersdale, PA, and a 25 year-old from Cumberland, MD, were fatally struck around 11:30PM on June 27th in the Ivy City area of Washington, D.C. by an Amtrak passenger train after they had gotten off their freight train to inspect a problem, according a statement by the National Transportation Safety Board. Amtrak train No. 175, which was coming from Boston and New York, had 121 passengers on board, hit the two men, a conductor and a conductor trainee, as the pair tried to identify what triggered a detector alarm that something was wrong with the wheels.

NTSB officials have launched an investigation to determine what happened. NTSB member Earl F. Weener said it was unknown what communication, if any, there was between CSX and Amtrak before the accident. The CSX train, headed out of Baltimore, was approaching Union Station when a detector was triggered. The dispatch was notified that there was probably something wrong with one of the wheels, and the train came to a stop for the crew to inspect the train before continuing. The engineer remained on the locomotive but the conductor and a conductor being qualified on the route stepped outside. At some point, they

crossed onto an active Amtrak track. The Amtrak train, headed to Union Station, struck and killed the two CSX crew members.

The accident happened in an area where four sets of tracks come together, two belonging to Amtrak and two belonging to CSX. Weener said the CSX train was crossing from one track to another and the Amtrak train was on an adjacent track. The crash happened near New York Avenue and Ninth Street NE, about a mile and a half northeast of Union Station near Gallaudet University, according to fire and rescue officials.

The Federal Railroad Administration is assisting in the investigation and is launching its own. Officials with the NTSB said they will look at several things, including the condition of the tracks, cameras in the area and other recordings, along with communications between CSX and Amtrak.

Subsequently it was noted that the two CSX crewmen could not have directly warned the Amtrak engineer that they were on the tracks since CSX and Amtrak operate on different radio frequencies, a union representative said. Herbert Harris, D.C.'s state representative for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, said Amtrak engineers have their own radio frequency to communicate with the Union Station terminal and get other instructions along the Northeast Corridor, while CSX has a separate radio system. "So there wouldn't have been any interactional communication between the crews unless CSX had notified either Amtrak or possibly the tower in Union Station that they had a crew that was either on the ground or had a train with a problem, and that may very well be one of the issues that they look into: the communication with who, and what if any notification had been given," Harris said. He represents Amtrak and commuter locomotive engineers. (Washington Post, WTOP News)

TEENAGER DIES AFTER BEING HIT BY VRE TRAIN. A 13-year-old girl has died after she was hit by a Virginia Railway Express train on the Manassas Line on June 28th. The teen was struck between mile marker 28 and 29 near Clifton, Virginia, around 3PM. Fairfax County police said the girl had been hiking with two family members: a 13-year-old cousin and her 21-year-old brother. The teens were walking on the bridge at Bull Run between Clifton and Manassas. When a train approached, her cousin was able to get out of the way, but the girl could not, according to police. Joseph Swartz with VRE said that the train was a "reverse flow" train, meaning it was heading to Washington, D.C. (WTOP News, ABC7 News, WMAL News)

GRADE CROSSING DEATH IN BELTSVILLE. A man is dead after a CSX train hit his vehicle in Beltsville early on July 4th, Prince George's County police said. Authorities said the man's utility vehicle was on the tracks when it was hit by a train around 3:40AM in the 11500 block of Baltimore Ave. The train was heading from Detroit to Baltimore and was carrying automobiles. WUSA9 photographer Michael Fuhr said the company name on the utility truck is Sign Planet out of Duluth, GA. The man was pronounced dead at the scene, officials said. It is not clear at this time why he was on the tracks or why he was there. Police said nobody else was injured in the crash. (WUSA9)

RAILFAN BLAMED IN WEEKEND CRASH WHILE CHASING STEAM IN NEBRASKA. Three people were injured in a two-vehicle crash on Saturday July 1st after a railfan hit another truck head-on while chasing Union Pacific 4-8-4 No. 844 on its run back west to Cheyenne, Wyoming, the Washington County Pilot-Tribune & Enterprise reports. The incident happened on U.S. Highway 30 near Kennard, Nebraska, northwest of Omaha. According to the newspaper, a Ford Ranger pickup truck, driven by a railroad enthusiast, hit a gray pickup truck head-on while traveling on the two-lane road. The Ranger was part of a caravan of vehicles chasing

No. 844 westbound. First responders had to use the jaws of life to pry open the Ford Ranger. Two of the three people involved in the incident were transported to a local hospital with non-life threatening injuries. The railfan involved in the incident received a citation from law enforcement, according to the newspaper article. The incident happened along UP's Blair Subdivision. No. 844 was headed back to Cheyenne after attending the 2017 College World Series in Omaha. (Trains News Wire)

RAIL SAFETY AND BASEBALL. Tampa Bay Rays Manager Kevin Cash fractured his a bone in his left foot and sprained his left ankle after twisting it running across railroad tracks outside Camden Yards on Sunday morning, July 2nd. "Pretty embarrassing to be honest with you," Cash said. Cash will continue to manage the team, though expect to see pitching coach Jim Hickey going to the mound more to handle pitching changes. Cash said he was running around 10:45 and rolled his ankle, in enough pain that he limped back to the stadium and sought treatment from the trainers. X-rays taken late Sunday morning showed the fracture. (Tampa Bay Times) Editor's note: I was at Sunday's Orioles/Rays game but did not know there was a rail news event to cover until after the game. And from my friend, Bruce Goldberg came the observation that: "Maybe it's time for Operation Lifesaver classes for baseball managers. Stop. Look. Step Lively."

AMTRAK TO BUILD LOCOMOTIVE SERVICE FACILITY. Amtrak has announced it will build a \$28 million locomotive service facility in Seattle. This is Amtrak's third major investment in the Seattle facility that provides services for two long-distance trains, the Empire Builder and Coast Starlight; Amtrak Cascades State supported corridor service; and maintenance for Sound Transit Sounder trains.

The project will include demolition of the site's existing buildings, utilities, tracks, and other structures, as well as construction of a new 31,000-square-foot locomotive shop. The yard's existing tracks will be reconfigured to allow access to the new facility, which will be equipped with a new 125-ton drop table, funded by the Washington State Department of Transportation, and a 55-ton overhead bridge crane. The project was scheduled to begin last month and completed in June 2019 by PCL Construction Services. (Amtrak Press Release)

AMTRAK OPERATING QUALIFYING TRAINS FOR NEW ROANOKE SERVICE. Amtrak, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and Norfolk Southern, began operating non-scheduled trains on June 5th. These trains serve as training for locomotive engineers and train conductors to learn the tracks and territory between Lynchburg and Roanoke. The trains will carry no passengers and are expected to operate two times per day, five days a week. This is an essential step toward completing the project to bring intercity passenger rail service to Roanoke in the fall. Amtrak Northeast Regional service will extend from Lynchburg to Roanoke and will operate one round-trip seven days per week.

Amtrak, DRPT, and the City of Roanoke are working to bring intercity passenger rail service back to the City for the first time in four decades. The Northeast Regional service will provide passenger service to and from Roanoke and to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and other cities along the Northeast Corridor. Northeast Regional service to Roanoke will be the fourth expansion of intercity passenger rail in the Commonwealth since 2009 following new or additional service to Lynchburg, Richmond, and Norfolk.

The effort to expand rail options in Virginia has been made possible by the Commonwealth's more than \$100 million strategic investment in NS' rail infrastructure, which makes this intercity passenger service extension possible. Amtrak and DRPT continue a partnership to provide more intercity passenger rail travel in Virginia. (Amtrak Press Release)

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS is published monthly by the Potomac Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 235, Kensington, Maryland 20895-0235
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