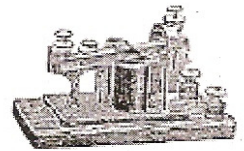


# Tarheel Telegrapher



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1 November 2012

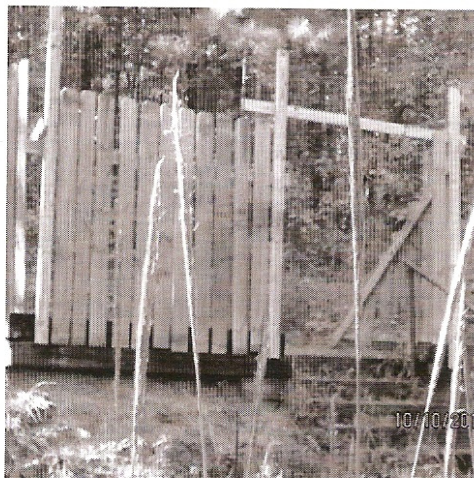
## NCRM NHVRy HALLOWEEN TRAINS

As always, the NHVRy *Halloween Trains*, operated the evenings of 20 and 27 October, were a big success this year. Passenger count for the first night was 902 and the second night was 938, for a total of 1,840 passengers handled through the spooky "Bonsal Corridor" filled with goolies and ghosties and things that go bump in the night.



SCARY MERCHANDISE FOR THE MUSEUM STORE

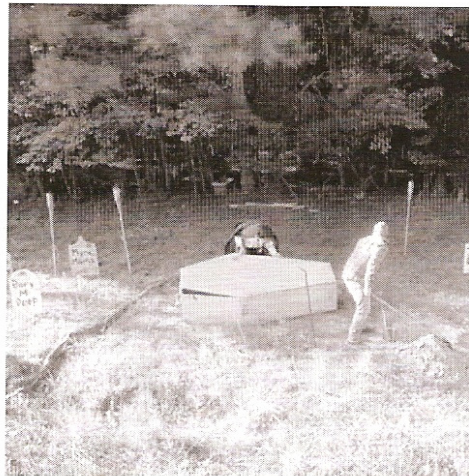
Chief Ghou! Shannon Curtin did a wonderful job of putting together all the spooky fun now seen by most of the public as the hallmark of these trains. Folks in the area



STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN MAKEOVER

talk about them all year-round, so we all must be doing something right. Much credit goes to all our other crews and volunteers as well for playing their parts in the festi-

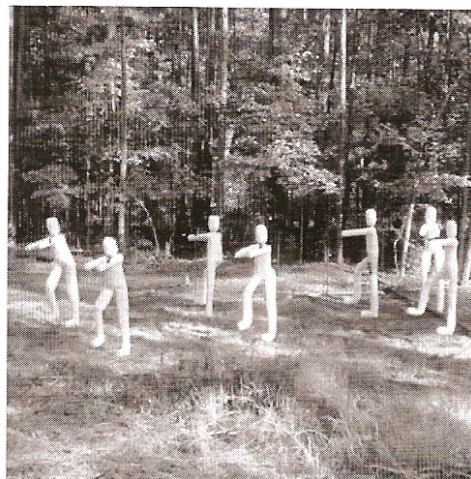
ties, from playing the costumed characters in the various spooky scenes along the line to last minute repairs to a locomotive to ensure we had the power needed to pull



THE CLASSIC VAMPIRE AND GRAVEDIGGER SCENE

the trains. (We must have had a goblin in the crankcase!)

The NHVRy *Halloween Trains* are one of our biggest events of the year, and if you have never at least ridden them, you are



THE ZOMBIE PARADE

missing a real treat. Look at the photos here. How could you not want to be a part of all this fun.

The NHVRy *Halloween Trains* will be back next year, so plan now to be a part of it all. After all, this is **YOUR** railroad. Come out and join the fun!

## CANADA TSB CALLS FOR VIDEO/VOICE RECORDERS ON LOCOMOTIVES

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada found once again in-cab voice recording would have assisted in the identification of unsafe conditions or practices. On 29 October 2011, a VIA Rail passenger train and a CN freight train were within 1,500 feet of a head-on collision near Meharry, MB. The VIA Rail passenger train was proceeding eastward on a CN single main track en route to Winnipeg, MN, when it failed to stop in the siding at Meharry. Neither the trackside visual cues nor the RTC written instructions alerted the VIA train crew members they were proceeding down the single main track rather than entering the siding. Both trains slowed to a stop at roughly 1,500 feet apart. Subsequently, the VIA Rail passenger train reversed back into the siding at Meharry without proper RTC clearance.

Over time, shortcuts or "adaptations" to operating rules and procedures can occur and become part of the routine operating practice. During the course of this investigation, the TSB determined when "adaptations" are made to railway operating rules and procedures, the redundancy and safeguards built into the rules are often compromised, increasing the risk of accidents. This investigation also presented particular challenges because much of the information relied primarily on the recollection of the train crews. Understanding the sequence of events leading up to the incident, including the crew interaction, is a key component in many rail accident investigations. In this case, as in many others, the investigation would have been more expeditious and complete had the locomotive on VIA 692 been equipped with an on-board voice or video recorder. On-board video and voice recorders are identified as an issue on the TSB's Watchlist.

## POLECAT TO PENOLA

Penola is located between Richmond and Fredericksburg in Caroline County, Virginia. In his article "*Interesting Station Names on RF&P Recalled*," in the Richmond News Leader, R. A. Dudley Barnett states the name of the station originally was "*Polecat*." The name was changed because of the consternation created among passengers by the announcement of the porter of "*Polecat*," causing a hurried lowering of all car windows.

### SPECIAL VISITOR

The office staff at the Bonsal Yard Office had a big surprise in mid-October when, as shown below, an adolescent deer



apparently decided to apply for a job as an Assistant Dispatcher. Although still too young for the job under FRA Rules, we did thank the deer for being interested, suggesting a reapplication in a few years. We also recommended staying off the tracks and away from hunters. The animal looked around a bit, and with a sneeze towards one of our volunteers, headed back for the woods to tell his friend Bambi of the experience. We welcome volunteers of all types and species at Bonsal, so if you are not active there, this demonstrated still another invalid excuse. Come down to have fun with the rest of us!

### TREES ON THE BRIDGE?

Are those permanent or just decorations for Halloween? The silhouette of a bat hanging there makes that a little uncertain, but the trees look nice where they are and provide a gateway for passengers between the Ticket Office and the Yard.



### USDOT GRANT

#### *Progressive Railroading*

USDOT has awarded a \$400,000 grant to the Norfolk Southern Railway to help develop an energy-saving battery-operated electric locomotive to be charged from a charging station. The locomotive could be used as a stand-alone for yard switching operations or combined with conventional diesel-electric locomotives to create a "hybrid train."



### BONSAL TICKET OFFICE AT NIGHT

How do we handle ticketing at Bonsal when we run night trains? This comes up each Halloween, so we thought we would show you. Remember that new Ticket Office we built a little while back? Well, it lights up! The picture below was taken almost in the dead of night by one of our vol-

unteers to show the foresight and planning having gone into the building. We can use it to handle just about any situation under just about any weather or lighting conditions. The efficiency of our online ticketing system means even that overhanging roof is enough to protect passengers from rain.



### PRESIDENT OBAMA THANKS BLET FOR ENDORSEMENT

#### *BLET Website*

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen received a letter from President Barack Obama thanking the Organization and its members for their endorsement of his re-election campaign. "I am writing you today to personally thank you for your recent endorsement of my candidacy for re-election as President of the United States," President Obama wrote. "It is an honor and a privilege to accept the endorsement of an organization that represents the hardworking men and women who help build our nation's middle class and keep our nation's railroads running safe and sound."

The BLET's Advisory Board, the organization's highest governing body, voted unanimously to endorse President Obama at a meeting on 31 July. "We believe President Obama is the best candidate to protect the current rights and future interests of the 55,000 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said.

President Obama has pledged to preserve Amtrak and the jobs of 20,000 hard working middle class union Americans employed there, thereby helping to ensure the future solvency of the Railroad Retirement system for all railroaders. He is also committed to expanding high-speed rail throughout the United States.

Obama wrote, "Railroads represent the veins of commerce and tourism in our nation, and BLET/Teamsters members, and workers across the union family, represent the backbone of our country. The service you provide the American people is invaluable, which is why I will continue laying the foundation for economy built to last, where your hard work pays off, your responsibility is rewarded and everyone plays by the same rules."

A copy of the letter is available on the BLET website.

### RAILROAD RESEARCH FOUNDATION

#### OBTAINS FRA GRANT

#### *Progressive Railroading*

With its partner NS, the RRF has received an FRA grant to develop a process designed to help NS employees avoid electronic device distractions while on the job to reduce the risk of accidents, incidents, injuries, and fatalities. Employed at NS Inman Yard in Atlanta, the process involves education about the dangers of distractions and peer support for appropriate use of electronic devices. "The RRF demonstrates its ability to handle a variety of research endeavors on behalf of the industry," said RRF Senior Program Director Sharon Cole.

## The Call Board

### NHVRy Crew Operating News

#### TRAINING CLASSES

All members of the train operating crew will be required to attend one day of training. Next training will be listed in the Schedule below.

#### RULES QUALIFICATION TESTS

Rules tests must be renewed every two years in order to remain current. If you have not taken a rules test in the last two years, see the dispatcher on duty as soon as possible.

#### BULLETIN BOOK

The Bulletin Book is in the Yard Office at Bonsal. All crew members are required to be aware of bulletins posted in the Book.

### ONERAIL COALITION EMPHASIS ON RAIL

#### Progressive Railroading

OneRail Coalition Executive Director Anne Canby has sent letters to President Barack Obama and Gov. Mitt Romney asking them to emphasize the importance of transportation and, in particular, rail as part of their economic agenda if elected. "We believe that transportation infrastructure is an essential underpinning of the entire American economy and that high-performing freight and passenger-rail lines are an integral part of our nation's transportation system and critical for the continued growth of our country," Canby stated in the letters to both candidates. The coalition represents a diverse group of freight- and passenger-rail stakeholders.

In her letter to Obama, Canby acknowledged the president's work during his first term "to support the future of America's rail transportation system, and we are writing to re-emphasize the importance of the intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, rail transit and freight-rail networks."

In her letter to Romney, Canby wrote that OneRail recognizes his campaign's focus on job creation and economic growth, and asked him to emphasize the importance of the nation's transportation system and the future of its intercity-passenger, commuter, transit and freight-rail networks.

"While the nation's privately owned freight railroads are investing billions in their own infrastructure, over \$23 billion in maintenance and capital spending in 2012 and more than \$500 billion since 1980, US public investment in passenger-rail infrastructure is lagging behind other nations," stated the letters to both candidates. "Placing greater emphasis on investments in the nation's rail infrastructure and operations will spur economic growth and encourage new business development, while adding new jobs and expanding employment opportunities throughout the nation."

### AMTRAK RIDERSHIP RECORD IN FY2012

#### Progressive Railroading

In fiscal-year 2012, Amtrak ridership totaled 31.2 million passengers, a 3.5% increase compared with FY2011 and the highest passenger count in the railroad's history and ninth ridership record in the past 10 years. For the fiscal year ending 30 September, ridership on the Northeast Corridor rose 4.8% to a record 11.4 million, state-supported and other short-distance routes increased 2.1% to a record 15.1 million and long-distance routes grew 4.7% to 4.7 million. Twenty-five of Amtrak's 44 services posted ridership records. For the fiscal year ending 30 September, ticket revenue rose 6.8% to a best-ever \$2.02 billion and system-wide on-time performance jumped from 78.1% in FY2011 to 83 percent in FY2012, the highest figure in 12 years.

Northeast Regional service ridership rose 6.6% to a record 8 million passengers and *Acela Express* ridership increased 0.5% to nearly 3.4 million. Ridership gains on other Northeast services included: *Keystone Corridor*, up 5.8% to a record 1.4 million; *Downeaster*, up 4.3% to 541,000; *Adirondack*, up 5.3% to 132,000; *Ethan Allen*, up 10% to 54,000; *Vermont*, up 5.5% to 82,000; *Empire Service*, up 3.8% to 1.06

million; and *Pennsylvanian*, 2.2% to 212,000.

Virginia's Washington-to-Lynchburg service posted a ridership spike of 14.1% to a new record of 185,000, and the Washington-to-Newport News service jumped 11.9% to a record 624,000. In North Carolina, the *Piedmont* service set a record of 162,000 passengers, up 16.2% year over year.

In the Midwest, ridership on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor, accommodating *Lincoln Service* and *Texas Eagle* trains, jumped 11% to a record 675,000 passengers. Other Midwestern routes setting records were: *Hiawatha*, up 2.3% to 838,000; *Missouri River Runner*, up 5.3% to 196,000; and *Blue Water*, up 1.1% to 189,000.

Ridership on California's San Joaquin route increased 7.2% to a record 1.1 million passengers and *Capital Corridor* passenger counts rose 2.2% to a record 1.75 million riders.

Meanwhile, all of Amtrak's 15 long-distance routes posted gains, resulting in their best combined ridership performance in nineteen years. The *Lake Shore Limited*, *Texas Eagle*, and *City of New Orleans* registered ridership records, while the *Empire Builder*, *Coast Starlight*, and *Cardinal* services posted significant percentage growth.

Amtrak officials expect ridership growth to continue into FY2013. Ridership numbers will get an early boost when the expanded *Downeaster* service to Freeport and Brunswick launches 1 November, and the Amtrak Virginia Northeast Regional service is extended to Norfolk starting 12 December.

Long-term factors contributing to continued ridership growth include improved services such as Wi-Fi and eTicketing, high gasoline prices, business travel growth on the Northeast Corridor, growing highway congestion, and air travel delays. Since 2000, Amtrak ridership has jumped 49%.

### AMTRAK SPEEDING UP TRAINS ON NS

#### Progressive Railroading

Amtrak has begun operating trains at 79 mph on NS track in preparation for the start of Amtrak service between Norfolk and Richmond in December. The trains, not carrying passengers, are running on NS between Portlock Yard in Chesapeake and downtown Suffolk, and between downtown Suffolk and Petersburg. Passenger train speeds through downtown Suffolk will increase from 40 mph to 60 mph in summer 2013, while freight trains will continue to operate at the current maximum speed of 60 mph. The operation serves as a training exercise for locomotive engineers and conductors to learn the track and territory. The trains will operate twice daily, Monday through Saturday. Track and warning signals have been improved to accommodate the higher train speeds.

### AMTRAK NAMES DECATALDO GM OF NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

#### Progressive Railroading

Amtrak has appointed Michael DeCataldo Jr. to the position of Northeast Corridor general manager. DeCataldo will be responsible for safety, customer satisfaction, ridership, on-time performance and financial results for the Northeast Corridor business line.

#### WHERE ARE YOU?

Please ensure we have your correct address, telephone number, and **EMAIL address**, at all times. Send a note to the email address on the first page of this publication.

#### NCRM 2012 SCHEDULE

- 15 November - NCRM Board Meeting
  - 16 November - NHVRy Group Day
  - 1 December - NHVRy Santa Trains
  - 2 December - NHVRy Santa Trains
  - 8 December - NHVRy Santa Trains
  - 9 December - NHVRy Santa Trains
  - 20 December - NCRM Board Meeting
- All events listed here are held at the NHVRy in Bonsal, NC unless otherwise noted.

NORTH CAROLINA RAILWAY MUSEUM, INC.

# NHV

## *New Hope Valley Railway*

### *Tarheel Telegrapher*

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