



The Mid-South Flyer

March 2010



A publication of the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc

March meeting highlight

BNSF's Bryan Schaffer to bring program on Citizens for Rail Safety, Operation Lifesaver



Because of their long history with railroads, on-line communities are vital to ensuring America's rail network remains safe from vandalism and mischief. Since many Americans follow the industry and trains with interest, it is only natural to tap the interest of these citizen-rail fans to help safeguard the railroads from unwanted incidents.

That is the premise that lead Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) to develop Citizens for Rail Security (CRS), the industry's first community-based rail fan reporting program. Since its inception in 2006, CRS members have helped protect the railroad by reporting security violations, trespassers or unusual occurrences. By the end of 2009, CRS had 9,273 members spanning all 50 states. CRS membership is now international representing Australia, Japan, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Due to the program's astonishing success, BNSF has broadened its scope by educating community and legislative groups, law enforcement, schools, and the rail fan community at large on citizen involvement in railroad security. As part of that effort, BNSF special agent and Mid-South Chapter member Bryan Schaffer will be bringing our March program on CRS and Operation Lifesaver.

Bryan began his career in public safety at age 18 as a firefighter and rose through the ranks to fire chief. His service includes work in emergency medical care and in public law enforcement. He is now a senior special agent and K-9 handler with the BNSF Railway Police in charge of the Birmingham office. Bryan's territory includes parts of three states, and he is frequently called upon to help with special events and operations elsewhere on the BNSF system.

When not out protecting the railroad, Bryan enjoys family life with wife Tonie, son James and daughter Jordan. The Schaffers make their home in Pinson, AL.

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By the Board

Highlights from the Board Meeting

The Mid-South Chapter board of directors held its bi-monthly meeting on February 27, 2010, in conjunction with the Smokey City rail show in Birmingham. Board members Stan Burnett, Marvin Clemons, Eddie Cook, Dan Ferris, Lee Singletary and Tim Smith convened for a working lunch, while Mid-South member Larry Kelpke staffed the chapter's membership table. After the meeting was called to order, Stan handed out minutes of the last board meeting and gave the treasurer's report. As of the end of February, the chapter had \$608.81 in the checking account.

Before proceeding with the order of business, Marvin distributed the chapter event calendar showing programmed activities through December 2010. Marvin congratulated Dan Ferris on his election as vice-chairman. Marvin noted that Dan's election has created a vacancy on the board and that the executive committee will appoint a replacement. Dan has also accepted the duties of membership chair and Marvin will handle programs until a new chair is named. Regarding membership, Dan suggested we broaden the scope of the chapter's programs and activities to appeal to younger and prospective members. Marvin suggested including a brief segment during the regular meetings for a member presentation on his or her favorite locomotive.

Tim discussed plans for developing the exhibit room. He plans to contact curators of area museums for ideas regarding displays and costs. Marvin mentioned that the Southern Museum at Kennesaw, GA may do a site review of the depot and offer recommendations for an overall exhibit plan. In a related development, Marvin reported that Frank Ardrey has donated his personal railroad collection, including his photo files, to the chapter's archive. The material will be transferred to the depot once the building is adequately secured and an area designated for our future archive.

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The Mid-South Flyer is published bi-monthly by the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society (R&LHS), Inc. The R&LHS is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study and preservation of railroad history.

National and chapter dues are \$42 and include subscriptions to the Society's twice-yearly magazine *Railroad History* and quarterly newsletter, as well as the chapter's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Mid-South Flyer*. Membership application can be made online at the Society's website at www.rlhs.org, or by writing to: Stan Burnett, Treasurer, 115 Hendrix Street, Oneonta, AL 35121.

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The Mid-South Chapter was well represented at the recent Smokey City Rail Show. Among members staffing the tables were (left to right) Lee Singletary, Stan Burnett and Marvin Clemons. The chapter recruited six new members at the show!

Community relations chair Eddie Cook reported on progress with plans for depot security. A meeting with Leeds city council representatives has been rescheduled for Monday, March 8th to discuss bids for a security system. Eddie will also serve as the chapter's liaison to the Leeds Festival and other civic events, including planning for the upcoming "Creekside" festival. Marvin and Eddie discussed prospects for the chapter hosting a railroad show in connection with this year's festival. In addition to using the meeting room, vendors could set up in the Livery Event Center across from the depot. The board was very responsive to the idea.

Lee Singletary discussed progress on obtaining quotes on logo t-shirt pricing and design. A discussion followed regarding different items of apparel suitable for fundraising and the company store. Marvin provided Lee with a detailed proposal for the installation of a working telegraph and telephone system for the agent-operator's office to support future grant requests for funding.

In closing, Marvin reported that the chapter has been invited to host the 2012 R&LHS convention in Birmingham. It would be a major undertaking for a new chapter, but would place us in the national spotlight. Following a brief discussion, the board agreed to table the proposal until more information can be obtained from the Society and discussed with the membership.

January program

General membership meeting draws a good crowd

Close to two-thirds of the Mid-South Chapter's membership was on hand for the chapter's first General Membership meeting held February 13 at the Leeds Depot.

According to Stan Burnett, the chapter's outgoing membership chair, the high turnout was particularly noteworthy in light of threatening weather, and considering the meeting had already been rescheduled once due to the threat of wintry travel conditions.

Under old business, chairman Marvin Clemons reported on the Smokey City rail show in December and Dan Ferris reported on the Atlanta rail show held in January. A total of three new members were signed up for the chapter. Board member Eddie Cook reported that he has received four quotes on a depot security system, and that two quotes appeared favorable. Under new business, Marvin gave a brief summary of the chapter's progress. He reported that among other accomplishments in 2009, the chapter had hosted a variety of interesting programs, work had begun on restoration of the Agent-Operator's office, and the chapter bi-monthly newsletter, the *Mid-South Flyer*, ran "on time" throughout the year.

Marvin was followed by board member Dan Ferris, who moderated the board's report to the membership. Membership chair Stan Burnett discussed membership development and the goal of increasing membership by 50% in 2010. Program chair Ron Mele recapped programs presented in 2009 and previewed some programs on tap for the coming year. Community relations chair Eddie Cook discussed the Leeds Folk Festival and the possibility of a chapter-sponsored rail show. Exhibits chair Tim Smith reported on plans for developing the depot's "John Henry" display, to include exhibits on Birmingham district railroads and Terminal Station.

Lee Singletary, chair for fundraising and the chapter's General Store, reported his goal of raising \$2500.00 for restoration of the telegraph and telephone system in the Agent-Operator's office. As communications and publicity chair, Marvin reported on plans for the chapter website. Member John Stewart has offered to host our site on his popular "BhamRails" website. The site is projected to be up by late summer or early fall 2010. Wrapping up, Dan discussed the need to develop a feasible five-year plan for the chapter's development and emphasized member involvement in the chapter's activities.

Following the board's report, the chapter held its annual election of officers. The board offered its slate of nominees including Marvin Clemons as Chairman and Stan Burnett as Secretary/Treasurer. Vice-Chairman Ron Mele had previously declined to run for re-election due to other commitments. Board member Dan Ferris' was nominated from the floor for vice-chair, and all three nominees were elected by unanimous consent.

After the election, the newly elected officers and board members hosted an open forum to address member questions and concerns. Among the suggestions offered by members were the need for outreach to other area historical and rail-related groups, greater publicity for chapter events, more member-only events and field trips, a member survey to determine volunteer interests, and welcoming visitors at chapter meetings and inviting their membership.

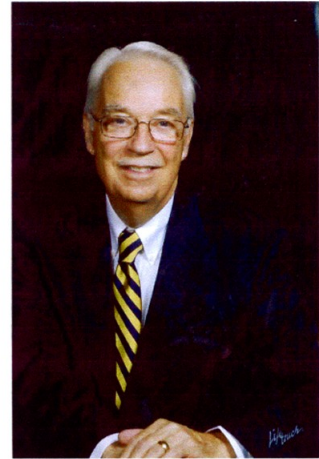
To close the meeting, Marvin presented a short photographic tribute to the late David Salter, a native Georgian whose colorful photography documented the transition from steam to diesel throughout the southeast.



From left to right, MSC board members Eddie Cook, Tim Smith, Stan Burnett, Dan Ferris and Marv Clemons respond to members' questions during the open forum at the membership meeting. (Photo by Ken Smith)

Remembering David Salter

Editor's note: On January 23, 2010, the nation's rail fan community, and Southeastern rail fans especially, lost one of the elder statesmen of our hobby. David Salter was a prolific photographer of railroads in his native Georgia and the Southeast region, particularly of his beloved Seaboard Air Line, but his interest extended to capturing the drama and romance of railroading wherever he happened to be. Unlike many of his contemporaries who primarily took roster photos, David's signature photograph featured a train in motion—he nearly always noted the speed—often taken from above or below grade, as opposed to the typical trackside shot. Also somewhat uncharacteristic of a generation of rail fans brought up with steam, David continued to photograph trains during and after the transition to diesel motive power well into the 1960's. He loved first-generation diesels, especially Seaboard's power, and shot them "at speed" all over Florida, Georgia and Alabama. But for all of the wonderful images he took and so generously shared, perhaps David's most enduring legacy was his dedication to preserving the photographic history of Southeastern railroads. In addition to his own extensive catalogue, David acquired and preserved the extensive negative collection of Frank E. Ardrey, Jr. including the work of many other noted Southeastern photographers such as Dick Sharpless and Hugh Comer. Nearly every book published on Southeastern railroads in the last 20 years features photographs from the Salter collection. David was a primary contributor to the 2007 publication "Birmingham Rails, The Last Golden Era," having granted the authors unrestricted access to his vast negative collection. Authors Marvin Clemons and Lyle Key attribute much of the book's critical acclaim to the outstanding selection of photographs appearing from the Salter collection, covering the steam-to-diesel transition in the Birmingham railroad district.



David Salter
1921—2010

In the Spring 2002 issue of Classic Trains, author John Gruber presented a profile of David taken from an extensive interview. For those who knew David, and particularly for those who did not, The Mid-South Flyer is pleased to reprint the following excerpts from the article, together with a sampling of David's personal photographs. Our special thanks to Classic Trains editor Rob McDonigal for granting use of the article.

(From "David W. Salter, a color pioneer in the South" by John Gruber, Spring 2002 Classic Trains)

In the post-World War II "classic era," railroad photographers seemed to be concentrated in four areas: New England and the Northeast, the Midwest, Colorado, and the Pacific Coast. They were few in the Southeast, which today makes the work of people like J. Parker Lamb and David W. Salter all the more valuable.

Salter grew up in the small south Georgia town of Pitts, on Seaboard Air Line's secondary Savannah (GA)-Montgomery (AL) route. "The big thing to do was to take the old gas-electric we called "the butthead" from Pitts over to Cordele. I'd take along my 120 snap-shot camera. It took lousy pictures, although a few have been worth saving. There were four lines into Cordele: the Seaboard, of course; Southern's Georgia, Southern & Florida line from Macon to Jacksonville; the Atlanta, Birmingham & Coast that ran from Atlanta to Waycross; and a Pidcock short line, the Georgia, Southwestern & Gulf, which was later named the Albany & Northern, that ran down to Albany. You could shoot six to eight trains within a couple of hours because they all arranged to get to Cordele at nearly the same time. All the lines crossed at the northwest corner of the one station."

On a family vacation to Fernandina Beach, FL. in summer 1940, Salter saw *Railroad* magazine at a newsstand. He was unaware of anything about railroads being published, so every day while at the beach, he went back to the newsstand to see if another issue had come in. Back at home, he subscribed, and later he placed a classified ad to obtain pictures of new Southeastern streamliners such as the *Southerner*, *Silver Meteor*, *Champion*, and *Henry M. Flagler*. "Either from that ad, or perhaps (Al) Kalmbach' purchased the subscription list of *Railroad*. I was mailed the initial

Remembering David Salter

issue of *Trains* in 1940. Richard Kindig's pictures fired my interest in getting a better camera and trying to emulate his style in capturing trains in action, though I never achieved his expertise."

Salter's simple curiosity served him well. "I liked to see the flora and fauna and how the railroad appeared. How big was the rail? How well was the track ballasted? How did the right of way appear? When out on the line, you could learn a lot about not only the trains and their consists, but more about the railroad itself."

Upon moving to Atlanta to attend junior college, Salter met Shelby Lowe, who had written him in answer to his ad in *Railroad*. "Neither Shelby nor I had a car," said Salter, "but he knew how to get to the major yards by bus or streetcar, and since he was a clerk for the Southern, we had no problems being admitted on any railroad property. One day at Inman Yard, where Shelby worked, he introduced himself to Dick Sharpless, who was there taking pictures. The three of us became fast friends, and since Sharpless had a car, he took us under his wing. Having wheels to visit the various facilities was much quicker than public transportation. Later when I transferred to the University of Georgia at Athens, I'd go back on weekends to Atlanta to take pictures, and spend as much time with Shelby and Dick as I could.

"The biggest problem was strictly one to me, not to them. They both loved the Southern and would just as soon spend all their time taking pictures of it, whereas I



On one of his outings to Birmingham, David spent the day with fellow photographer Frank Ardrey shooting action around Weems. While Frank shot the Southern, David pointed his lens towards his "home road" Seaboard and caught this fine view of the "Silver Comet" heading for Birmingham. You don't have to be a Seaboard fan to admire this photo.



The Seaboard overpass at Weems provided a fine vantage point for David to grab this classic shot of CofG #708, a 2-10-2 J-1 heading a manifest for Columbus GA on August 1, 1948. A stickler for detail, David duly noted that the train passed Weems at 1:15 pm.

was fascinated by all of the lines in and out of Atlanta. Of course, I liked the Seaboard, and its Georgia Division was totally different from the Alabama Division where I grew up.

Frank Ardrey from Birmingham came to Atlanta a time or two, and we took the Southern's night train to Birmingham and spent the day with him as our host. He took us out to Weems where Southern and Central of Georgia came together and paralleled each other into Birmingham. Seaboard crossed them near this junction, so it was a great place to photograph the three lines.

Remembering David Salter

Photographically, Salter's most productive period was in the 1960's after he was transferred back to Atlanta (with Chrysler). "The Seaboard's line west to Birmingham offered a lot of photographic locations. The terrain was interesting, and although there were three tunnels, I never got a shot at any of them. There was a high trestle over Pumpkin Creek and several interesting, accessible areas just across the state line in Alabama. CSX has abandoned the Atlanta-Birmingham line, and now several miles of it is the Silver Comet Trail. It was also fun to take a vacation and go down to Florida to shoot on the Seaboard's main line. After the Florida East Coast strike, all south Florida passenger trains were rerouted over the Seaboard, which handled 14 to 16 passenger trains a day."



Salter will not specify a favorite Seaboard photo. "I always enjoyed shooting the Silver Meteor, as it was a first-class train. The equipment was nice, the train was long, and Seaboard still catered to passenger service. In earlier days, I got some interesting steam shots as Seaboard had a variety of power."

Unlike the flashier "Silver Comet," the Seaboard's "Local" was a maiden-of-all-work between Atlanta and Birmingham. David caught the Birmingham-bound with a sun-lit E7 on the point just as she came off of the Pumpkinvine Creek trestle near Dallas, Georgia. The blending of train and rural countryside was characteristic of David's photographic art.

Salter's photos appear in many books and magazines. Although he talks modestly of his accomplishments, the record speaks for itself. His work, and the works of others he has collected, presents a magnificent record of the changing railroad scene in the South and elsewhere. "I am just having a good time trying to remember it as it was. It's strictly an avocation," he said.



While David hesitated to name a favorite photo, he confessed he always enjoyed shooting the "Silver Meteor" in Florida. In November 1961, David shot these dramatic "coming-and-going" scenes of SAL #57, the southbound "Meteor," near West Palm Beach, with E6 #3010 in the lead and a signature "boat tail" observation-lounge bringing up the rear. No speed was recorded, but the passenger trains along Seaboard's South Florida raceway were noted for speeds of 100 + m.p.h.

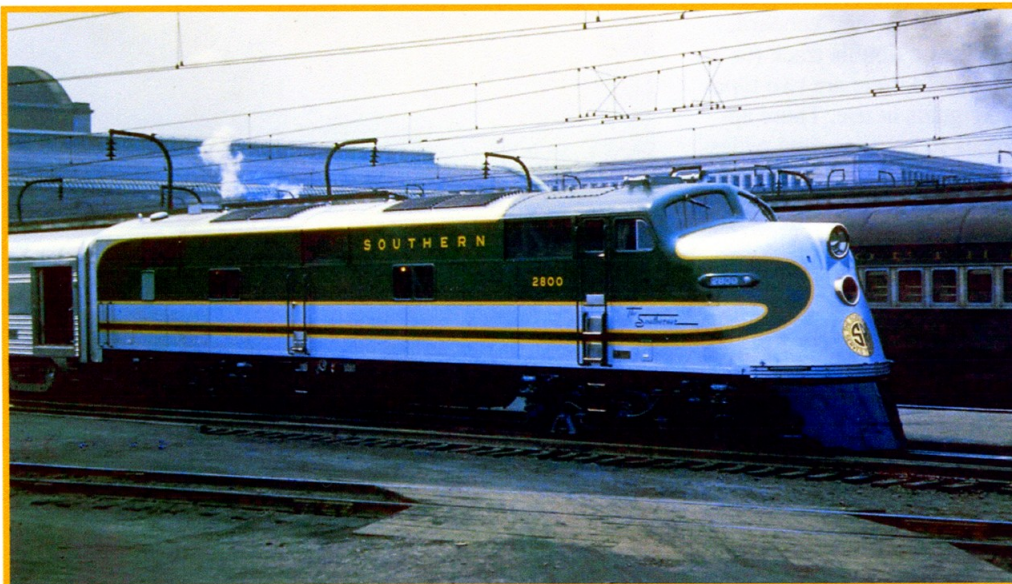
Golden Era Classics



Switching the Seminole at "BT" — Back in the 1960's, one of the morning rituals at Birmingham Terminal Station (abbreviated "BT" by the railroads) was switching out the Illinois Central's southbound *Seminole* from Chicago in preparation for its departure for Jacksonville, Florida, via the Central of Georgia and Atlantic Coast Line railroads. As the IC's host railroad into Birmingham, the St. Louis-San Francisco ("Frisco") Railroad handled the switching chores. On a sunny morning in September 1964, Frisco #262, an EMD NW-2 switcher, has just set the Seminole's power over onto the ready consist in Track 10 for an 8:25 a.m. departure for Columbus, Georgia. Credit Birmingham photographer Jim Thorington for this *Golden Era Classic*.

All about style!

Was there ever a more elegant diesel locomotive than the EMD E6? Built for speed and geared for 117 mph, the E6 was the epitome of streamlining with its slant nose and sweeping lines. And was there ever a lovelier color scheme applied to an E6 than the green and gold worn by *The Southerner*, seen here at the end of her run in Washington DC in 1941. You be the judge.



From the Observation Platform by Marvin Clemons, Chairman

March is here, and after an unusually long winter, Spring is finally in the air! The robins and finches are busily building nests in the English ivy, and the daffodils are about to bloom. It's nature's time for renewal, and a reminder that "old things have passed away, and all things have become new." It's time for new endeavors and fresh pursuits.

As we enter our second year, the Mid-South Chapter is poised for new growth and renewal. Our membership is growing at a healthy rate, our meeting attendance continues to climb, and many exciting opportunities lie ahead. Our new board is able and willing to lead the way. All we need for success is the support and involvement of members like you. *You* are the key to our success as a chapter. We need *your* time and talent to do the many little things that make our chapter work, from making our visitors feel welcome, to setting up and putting away after meetings, to working on exhibits, to developing our archive, to helping with the newsletter and publicity, to staffing our membership table at rail shows, to leading a program. The list goes on.

Put simply, there is something important that only *you* can do, and your chapter needs *you* to do it!

At the recent membership meeting, we heard a lot of discussion about "member involvement." As I see it, there are two ways you can become involved: Either wait to be asked, or volunteer. I'll start by asking each board member to invite at least two other members to work with them on their committees. At the same time, I'm going to ask each of our members to choose just one area or activity to which you'll volunteer some time. To make it easier, we'll be passing around a volunteer roster listing the areas where help is needed. All you'll need to do is choose whatever will make good use of your time and talent, sign up, and then get to work.

Ah, Spring. Don't you just love it!



WHERE ARE WE?

After a couple of toughies, we thought we'd make this issue's mystery photo slightly more "reader-friendly." No doubt we're approaching an overpass on the Seaboard. We're on double track (or are we?) and there are two types of signals in use. There appears to be a concrete pedestal on the left side of the track that once may have supported a structure of some kind. Think you know? OK, then see if you can figure out the train we're shooting from!



What? Mid-South Chapter Meeting – CRS and Operation Lifesaver

When? Saturday, March 13 at 2 p.m.

Where? The Historic Leeds Depot at Leeds, Alabama

Who? All Members and Guests