



The Mid-South Flyer

July 2013



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

\$3.5M fundraising begins

“Mighty J” gets green light for restoration

ROANOKE, Va. (from the TRAINS Newswire) – Famed Norfolk & Western Class J No. 611, one of the most famous 4-8-4s in American railroad history, will steam again — if a \$3.5 million fund raising campaign is successful.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation has announced its intention to return the iconic Roanoke-built locomotive to excursion service.

“We are pleased to say that we can ‘Fire Up 611!’ But the time is now and it will take 611 fans around the world to stoke her fire,” said Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., executive director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation. “Today we are kicking off the official capital campaign.”

The Fire Up 611! Committee determined that \$3.5 million would be needed to return the locomotive to service. The costs include a complete mechanical restoration of the locomotive, a shop maintenance facility and support to develop the excursion program.



Mid-South Chapter BBQ and photo contest set for Saturday, July 13

The 4th annual Mid-South Chapter Barbeque & Social will be held on Saturday, July 13 at the Historic Leeds Depot. The depot will be open at 11 and lunch will be served at 12 noon. All members and their guests are invited to attend and bring a covered dish to share, with barbeque pork and chicken provided by the Chapter. Please RSVP your attendance by Thursday, July 11 to John Browning at john@cvsllc.com or phone 205-601-1975. Following lunch, the chapter will host a member photo competition to select photos for the 2014 all-color photo calendar. Entries should be high contrast 8x10 photos suitable for scanning from either the original photo, color slide or negative of a railroad subject within the Mid-South region of Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi or north-west Florida. Contest guidelines are available from Ron Mele, contest coordinator, by emailing Ron at rmeg12@charter.net.

Ultimately, the goal is to raise \$5 million so that No. 611 has an endowment to keep it running for years. “The Virginia Museum of Transportation does not have the resources to fund this project alone,” Fitzpatrick said. “We are asking her fans across the globe who want to see her run again to be a part of this important capital campaign. Her appeal extends to people everywhere who value heritage, craftsmanship and the thrill of bringing an American icon to life.”

The inspection and restoration would take place at the North Carolina Transportation Museum roundhouse at Spencer, N.C., pending the conclusion of a formal agreement with North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation. Work would be done by a combination of paid contractors and experienced volunteer labor. “We are lucky that the guys who did this work in the 1980s and 1990s were in their 20s and 30s then,” Preston Claytor, chairman of the Fire Up 611! Committee told the Trains News Wire. “While they are older, we can still use these guys.”

Claytor says the goal is to have enough money to see the project through before rebuilding work begins. “We have to feel we can make it go without negatively impacting the rest of museum operations,” Claytor says, “because museum operations simply can’t bankroll the locomotive.”

The Virginia Museum of Transportation must reach its fundraising goal by Oct.

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“Mighty J” gets green light for restoration *(continued)*

31, 2013 for the locomotive to join NS’s 21st Century steam program in 2014.

“If her supporters bring No. 611 back to life, NS will be eager and excited for this incredible part of rail history to join the 21st Century Steam Program,” says Norfolk Southern spokesman Frank Brown. “The return of 611 would represent a great opportunity to celebrate our heritage while educating a new generation about the critical role railroads play in today’s economy.” Currently the 21st Century Steam Program includes Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum’s Southern Railway 2-8-0 No. 630, and the Fort Wayne (Ind.) Railroad Historical Society’s Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 No. 765.

Claytor says the committee feels that having the locomotive running next year is a realistic goal. “We feel very confident, especially with the work that was done in the late 80s and early 90s, about what we will have to do and what we won’t have to do,” he said. “We are the real beneficiaries of the work that was done in the 1980s and 1990s. Realistically it needs some engine truck work, and it needs the form 4 (Federally mandated inspection), and of course all the other things that must be done after this much time has passed, such as air brake work. But with the right amount of volunteers and labor and some good luck, six months is very realistic,” he said.

As far as mechanical condition, Claytor says one area that would need attention is the wheels. “The wheels are approaching the end of their useful life to where they would not be FRA compliant,” he said. Replacing the wheels was work that was planned over the winter of 1994-95 that was never conducted with the end of the original NS steam program. One of the main mechanical focuses will be to put new wheels on the locomotive. At the same time all the wheel bearings will be inspected. All N&W J class locomotives were roller bearing equipped.

The new shop would be built on the museum grounds in Roanoke, but it could be a year to 18 months before it is constructed. It will include one track with a drop pit, while another will be just rails and concrete. The building will be designed to handle other purposes such as special events, where tables and displays could be set up as needed.

When the locomotive isn’t undergoing maintenance, it will not remain in the shop but be put on display at the museum, although it may swap display positions from its current location so the “J” is more prominent, Claytor says. “We would prefer to keep it closer to the main displays as opposed to people having to go over to the shop to see it, where they can get up close and touch it as opposed to just looking at it through glass,” he says.

One nod to the 21st Century will be the return of a twin seal beam headlight the engine had when it was returned to operation in 1982. Claytor said the original single bulb headlight the engine was built with is too dim to allow crews to see adequately during night operations.

N&W built No. 611 in its Roanoke shops in 1950, and the engine was in regular service until its retirement in 1959. It was placed on display in Wasena Park in 1962 and withdrawn in 1981 for overhaul and mainline excursion work for Norfolk Southern from 1982 to the conclusion of its steam excursions in December 1994. No. 611’s fans are invited to visit fireup611.org to learn more and to donate to the Fire Up 611 Capital Campaign.





By the Board

Minutes from the June 2013 Board Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mid-South Chapter was called to order by John Browning on June 29, 2013, at 10:12 a.m. at the Leeds Depot, Leeds, Alabama. The meeting was held in the agent's office due to the baggage room being in use for an outside event.

Board of Directors members present: John Browning, Marvin Clemons, Lamont Downs, Hal Holley, Larry Kelpke, James Lowery, Lee Singletary, Tim Smith

Board of Directors members absent: Natasha Bettis, Dr. Carl Marbury, John Stewart

Guests (non-voting): Pat Honsa

Quorum

A quorum was present for the meeting.

Treasurer's Report

James Lowery distributed the Treasurer's report for the period January 1-June 26, 2013. Lowery noted that the Dollar-A-Month fund is currently a petty cash account rather than a bank account. Lowery moved that effective July 1, 2013 the Dollar-A-Month fund be included in our bank account and treated as a bank account fund. The motion was seconded and passed.

Lowery announced that he will be out of state beginning in mid-July for a time, and will have the books and checkbook with him. Lowery will leave a deposit slip with John Browning in case any funds come to him while Lowery is out of town, and Browning can use the bank account debit card if he needs to make any purchases while Lowery is out of town.

Secretary's Report

The Board agreed to dispense with the reading of the April 27 meeting's minutes. Lee Singletary moved that the minutes be approved, and the motion was seconded and passed.

Downs called for corrections to the roster that was previously distributed to Board members and as a result transferred two paid members from the unpaid category. Browning will check with Bettis regarding her membership status. Clemons asked if Downs had received anything from National lately; Downs reported that he has not. The last roster received was in early February dated January 31. He has received a few notifications of new memberships; the last was received in May.

Old Business

Status of Caboose Repairs. Larry Kelpke reported that he tried installing the Plexiglas for the caboose windows but that it was incorrectly cut. He is having it re-cut. There has been no progress on the repair of the steps yet. Prolonged discussion ensued. Clemons asked if we could do the work ourselves; Kelpke expressed concerns about potential liability, with Browning concurring. Frank Little, Chairman of the Board of the Leeds Historical Society has verbally given us permission to rebuild the steps. Clemons suggested getting a letter from Little giving us approval in writing to do the work. Browning suggested having the city inspector

approve the finished work. Lowery warned of personal as well as organizational liability issues, since the chapter is not incorporated. Clemons then suggested that we offer to assist the Historical Society financially or with volunteer labor. Kelpke will approach the historical society. The general consensus was that the work needs to be done before the September open house.

Digitized Newsletter Archive Update. Clemons reported that the digitization is finished. As soon as the next newsletter is added the files will be indexed and uploaded. We have not yet received a copy.

Status of Ardrey Exhibit. Tim Smith reported on planning. Two remaining issues to be resolved are the office kitchen area and the need for a doorway between the two waiting rooms. A streetcar bell is being donated to the exhibit. He suggested a wall for streetcars and a wall for Birmingham Terminal Station. The exhibit committee has not met since the last meeting. Browning reported that John Stewart was looking into the electronics needed. Clemons said that money was available and that we need to get started on setting up the exhibit. The planning committee needs to meet.

New Chapter Website Update. Smith reported that there have been no changes since the April meeting. Browning asked about the possibility of using Facebook's targeted advertising, such as marketing to people who have visited other railroad museum sites. Clemons asked about volunteers who could work on designing and maintaining the chapter website. Our page on National's site is very out of date. Clemons suggested a website builder called WebSite Tonight, sponsored by Go Daddy, which he has used. Browning will ask for volunteers for the website at the next chapter meeting.

Some discussion intervened on the calendar contest and possible formats.

Archives Committee Report. Clemons reported that the Archives Committee has met, consisting of Clemons and David Coombs, curator of the Heart of Dixie library. He also wants to include Dr. Marbury as a member. Clemons moved that Coombs and Marbury be appointed to the committee. The motion was seconded and approved.

The prime need is to locate a suitable environment for the archives; the Leeds City Library seems like a good possibility. Clemons will talk to Marbury. Browning asked about the current archive contents. Singletary said they include the Ardrey prints and some books and papers. A place is needed where people can donate items and have them properly cataloged. We would want to keep digital copies as the originals would become Library property and we would no longer have control over them. Singletary described his experiences with the L&N archives at Bowling Green.

Status of Tax Exemption under R&LHS National. Lowery reported that a request has been submitted to National's Board. There are basically two options: 1) donated items become National's and they would have the option to pass them along to the chapter, or 2) National would get a group exemption for the chapters and submit the appropriate paperwork to the IRS after collecting the necessary information from the chapters. We do not know what National has decided.

Other Old Business: none.

New Business

Chapter Picnic/Lunch and Photo Contest on July 13. Browning reported that Ron Mele will handle the photo contest. Clemons suggested some possible requirements for photo submissions: Color; good print or high resolution scan; horizontal format; good contrast. Browning added they should be taken within our area [Note: in a mailing to the membership later that day Browning clarified this to mean "within our chapter area (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee)"]. He also mentioned the TTX photo contest and its digital criteria. Clemons will include the specifications in the upcoming newsletter.

Browning suggested that take-out fried chicken and barbecue be provided rather than trying to cook here and risk interference by the weather. Clemons said we need a head count. A decision was made to limit the take-out to barbecue chicken and pork. Clemons is planning to invite some NS officials, and Dr. Marbury may invite some Leeds city officials.

Clemons announced that Matt Lawson has provided photographs from the 30s and 40s in Birmingham to use as a slide show for the meeting. It was ultimately agreed that Board members would arrive at 11:00 am, the picnic would start at 11:30 am, lunch would be around noon, and about 1-1:30 pm the slideshow and photo contest would take place.

The disappearance of the large table was discussed. There is a general shortage of tables and several are needed. Kelpke will look into this.

Downs asked if we definitely had the building reserved; we think we do. Clemons will confirm our building reservation [Note: Clemons confirmed our reservation the next day].

Internet and Voicemail for Depot. Browning reported Internet service will be \$49.95 and the installer will need access to the building. Voicemail will be \$9.95/month plus fees and taxes and will simply need to be turned on. Installation should take place before the chapter picnic.

Chapter Roster and Dues Situation. Browning reported that the Pacific Coast Chapter has decided to collect their own dues and keep their own roster, reverting back to the system in place several years ago. Browning has contacted National about this and expressed our concerns. National replied that they are having a serious problem with membership record maintenance; discussions with several outside vendors have collapsed. They are "feverishly scrambling" to find a solution, and will advise us when the situation is being resolved.

Clemons provided historical background on the "membership crisis." Beginning in 2010 National took over membership record maintenance, and after about a year problems developed.

Browning has received a second letter from National, this time addressed to all chapter heads. It again expressed concern with the situation and repeated the previous problems with outside vendors. It added that if the chapters have possible candidates to handle these duties (vendors or individuals) they should provide the information to National; and also suggested that any proposed vendor should agree to post a working database to a secure website for access at any time.

Browning suggested a management firm in Hoover that specializes in non-profit organizations and will send them National's contact information.

Clemons said that if the situation is not straightened out by October 1 the next renewal cycle will begin and at that time we will need to make a decision. Browning expressed concern about possible tax ramifications of our accepting dues; Lowery replied that accepting dues is not a problem.

Clemons moved that the Board express its concern to Robert Holzweiss and its desire to be patient, but that it will have to make a decision within the next three to four months. The motion was seconded and passed.

Other new business. Clemons reported that the newsletter will go out next week. Stewart is starting a column on model railroading and railroad history.

Adjournment. Singletary moved for adjournment. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 am. *(Draft minutes submitted by Lamont Downs, Secretary, subject to adoption by the Board of Directors)*

Member Column

Railroad History and Model Railroading

by John Stewart



If you are reading this you must have the “train gene”. It manifests itself in different ways, but we basically love trains. We think about, photograph, read about and many of us may model trains. Model railroading provides a wonderful hobby that may take many directions, requires a broad set of skills, and may require a strong interest in railroad history. At least, it has been for me. And much of it is Marv Clemons fault...

I grew up with the proverbial Lionel layout built by our Daddy for 3 boys, of which I was the youngest. My Daddy was from Pittsburgh and our rolling stock tended to mirror the northwestern roads. If Pearl Harbor hadn't come along, Daddy would have gone to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Now that would have likely changed my life!

Instead his 1940 ROTC Commission put him in the Army building and operating army bases of which one was in Nashville, TN. By the time I came along, the family was living in Nashville where my folks settled after being stationed there in WWII. Since my folks came from Pittsburgh, there must be another gene relating to the steel industry in my system. Nashville had no steel industry, but the home of my cousins in Pittsburgh sure did and we visited them when I was growing up. A little fertilizer for that gene...

I moved from Nashville to Birmingham on a corporate transfer in 1992. For the first six months I lived in motel rooms until my family could move in June of that year. I began to haunt bookstores looking for local history books to learn about my new home. I quickly put the dormant steel industry gene in motion when I realized that Birmingham had a unique industrial history that centered upon railroads. I had a model railroad in Nashville, built by three of us friends that worked together. It featured steam era railroading and was generally free-lanced. Nashville is sort of a one railroad town, so I loved the L&N. But other than loving to see passenger trains at Union Station when my grandmother came to town, my railroad interests were somewhat general. I had this lingering interest in coal mines, and it turns out there is a gene for that, too. My great-grandfather was a coal broker in Pittsburgh and the in-laws started coal mines...

When I moved to Birmingham, I quickly realized that it was a real railroad town, and I began to learn the local rail and industrial history. A chance meeting at a train show with a fellow named Clemons led to the acquisition of a “Big Blue Map” of the Birmingham – Bessemer Terminal District dated 1935. With this map, I began to really understand the true extent of Birmingham’s rail and industrial history. And I knew that I wanted to model this in my next model railroad, as soon as we bought a basement for me with a house above for my wife and three young sons. It was at this time that I began to do more serious research about Birmingham’s rail and industrial history and that led to the development of a website, www.bhamrails.info which is still online today. And I still learn new “stuff” about Birmingham’s rail and industrial history every day.

If you are a model railroader there are many facets to pursue in the hobby. There is “pure model building”, there is layout building with a set of trains, there is “model train collecting”, and so many more ways the hobby may manifest itself. Some folks like to model prototype locale and operations. My viewpoint of model railroading has evolved over many years of actively following the hobby, sometimes “building” and sometimes “dreaming” about my railroad empire in miniature. (You may have heard of the Bluebird Café in Nashville? That building housed Doc Yates’ drugstore and that’s where I would buy my Model Railroader magazines.) My interests developed such that I wanted to try to create scenes or vignettes of specific parts of a local railroad of interest. I also evolved into one who tends to have an “around the walls” style layout. I wanted a layout where the operator may generally follow the train along the layout. So, we’re modeling the railroad right of way and immediate area nearby. We needed to have “work” for the railroad to do – like Thomas the Tank engine: “really useful”.

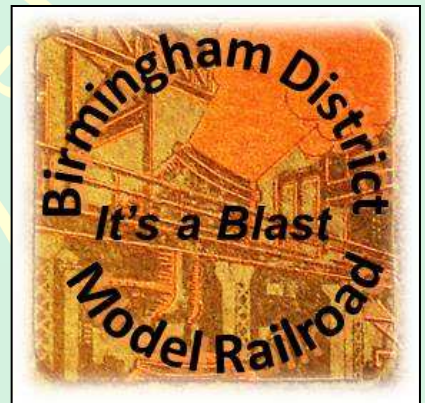
Since Birmingham was founded upon the junction of two railroads, and since the railroads were literally essential to develop the District's unique set of natural resources to make iron, my vignettes for the new railroad were developing to be a way to represent Birmingham's industrial heritage in some way. There is an old saying 'you can't take it with you'. In model railroading there is a reality that 'you can't build everything you want to build'. There simply is not enough space, and many compromises must be made if you want to build a theme-based railroad. Especially if you are seeking to create scenes that evoke or interpret key aspects of a real place like Birmingham. We call this "selective compression". So, the dilemma was and still is, what and how do you build a model railroad that represents the Birmingham District's railroads and industry in some meaningful way? Even though my model railroad has been "built", the dilemma continues. For my model railroad isn't even finished – not at all.

The good news is that in my opinion, a model railroad is never "finished". Not all, including my dear wife, understand that idea. But I am perfectly happy "working on the railroad" and playing with it at the same time. So, the Birmingham District Model RR is operational, doesn't have much scenery and provides a lot of fun for me and friends who help operate it. We will get around to adding scenery, but in the meantime we have fun and we find that there are modifications that need to be made to make the railroad better. And we continue to learn about railroad history and represent it on the railroad.

Consider this aspect of railroad history: The railroad industry is not finished and likely won't be. It continues to change and evolve. Parts are built and discarded; industries develop, evolve and fade. A friend of mine likes to say "these are the good old days". Today railroad future is tomorrow's history. For me, history plays a big part of the effort and a big part in the enjoyment of the model railroad hobby. But consider the issues and compromises that must be made as one develops and enjoys a hobby like model railroading that follows an historical theme and locale. It seems to me that it is at once a blessing and a curse.

The blessing is that you are guided by what you are trying to represent. I would never buy a UP Big Boy steam locomotive for my railroad because it would not be an appropriate part of my world of the Birmingham industrial district in the steam engine era. Nor would I buy the latest model of a modern specialty freight car no matter how gorgeous and super-detailed it might be.

The other side of the coin is the continuing struggle to decide what and where to model, and how to put scenes or vignettes together in a meaningful way. What item must be included and why; what items may be overlooked and how does one justify that? Is it OK to put something in the "wrong" place if it fits the layout space and helps to justify the story I am trying to tell. And as the layout is viewed by others, are they able to "see" the story that I am trying to tell? How far can I bend history and space and still do the job I am trying to do. Will anyone notice? Will anyone care? Does it matter? Now, these are not things that I lose sleep over (at least most of the time). I firmly believe that in my HO scale version of Birmingham that I may define my own version of reality and still have fun with the overall project. At the same time, the pieces need to fit in some way. But, it is, after all, a hobby for fun.



Most model railroads have, in the words of the great model rail planner John Armstrong, "givens and druthers". These are the things that are really desired to be represented by the owner of the railroad. For example, I knew I needed/must have a blast furnace. I needed/must have a representation of Birmingham's downtown grade separation. I needed/must have a representation of the sources and processes for the raw materials to make iron – iron ore, coal to make coke and limestone. These resources and their proximity are, after all, the very reason that Birmingham came to be where it came to be. The list of givens and druthers became larger and more complex. What to do...?

As this contribution to the newsletter continues, I plan to talk more about these considerations and how they are woven into a representation of Birmingham's railroad and industrial history. Because like the old song says, "you can't have one without the other." And I suppose that model railroading is sort of like a marriage, or maybe it's a love/hate relationship. Like marriage, it a learning experience filled with compromise.

An Overview of Logging Railroads in the United States – Part One

by David C. Lester, Contributing Editor

In the May issue of the *Mid-South Flyer*, I completed a brief review of a two-volume set of books on logging railroads in Mississippi entitled *Steam Whistles in the Piney Woods*, by Gilbert H. Hoffman. I came across these books while in southeastern Mississippi about two years ago, and they piqued my interest in the railroad's role in the development of the timber industry in the United States. Since using railroads to develop timber stands throughout the country is a key part of U.S. railroad history, I've decided to devote three additional pieces in the *Mid-South Flyer* to exploring this topic. This is the first of the three.

When settlers arrived in the United States in the mid-1700s, one of the first things they noticed was the tremendous amount of timber available across much of the land. The initial work with this timber was to remove enough of it to clear land for growing crops, but it quickly became apparent that this high-quality timber could be used for building homes, farm structures, and many other applications. Once the settlers needed to move the wood any distance outside of their immediate settlement, the challenges of moving timber created a lot of consternation. (1)

For those who lived near rivers, and the river was located at or near a place where they wanted to deliver the timber, floating the logs down the river was one option. However, animal power had to be used to get the cut timber from the forest to the river, and the whole system was not very efficient. Settlers then turned exclusively to animal power, but this was not ideal either. The weight of the timber was such that animals could not pull it for long distances, because many of the roads over which they traveled were rough, with moderate grades that added to the strain on the animals. (2)



Mule team with log skid (Marvin Clemons collection)



Early Florida logging railroad (Marvin Clemons collection)

As with many things in life, the development and application of steam power in the nineteenth century revolutionized the viability of the logging industry. Steam-powered machinery aided the handling and loading of logs onto rail cars. And, steam locomotives finally provided sufficient power for moving the logs by rail to the sawmill. (3)

Once the steam locomotive became an alternative for moving logs, the logging railroad had to be built, and cars had to be constructed to actually carry the logs. Many logging railroads were built for temporary use, and the rails and ties were made of various types of wood, with little or no ballast under the track.(4) When the timber had been exhausted in a particular area, the railroad was pulled up and moved to another location.

The type of cars used in logging operations ranged from traditional flatcars to cars called “disconnects”, which were essentially two trucks (two axles and four wheels make up one truck) connected with the log to be moved. One of the more common cars used was called the “skeleton” car, which was composed of two trucks connected with a center sill, along with side stakes to hold the logs on the car.(5)

Logging railroads often had to negotiate steep hills and tight curves, and special, geared, locomotives were introduced to more effectively move the trains along the railroad. The locomotives moved slower, but the greater traction they provided was needed to move the trains around the atypical track grades and alignments. Three models of locomotive were dominant – the Shay, the Climax, and the Heisler – and we will look at these locomotives in detail in Part Two of this series.

The ultimate destination of logs moved by rail was, of course, the sawmill, where the logs were cut into boards or other shapes that might be needed. The sawmill evolved over time, as steam power and electricity became available, both of which improved productivity of a sawmill. Sawmills in the early 1900s were composed of a sawmill building, which is where the actual sawing was done, an office or general-purpose building, a mill pond, the railroad line, and the drying area. (6) Interestingly, logs being stored temporarily to await movement into the sawmill, the logs were better preserved in the water. (7)



Early sawmill (Marvin Clemons collection)

The distribution of the lumber industry over time is worth noting. While multiple areas of the country had logging operations concurrently over the past two hundred years, the leading areas of production changed as timber supplies were reduced. For example, Maine was the initial leader in lumber production, followed closely by the South. Then the leading areas of lumber production moved to New York, then Pennsylvania, Michigan was next, followed by Wisconsin. Finally, the center of lumber production was centered in the Pacific Northwest.

As mentioned earlier, we’ll look at the variety of locomotives that were used in logging operations in the next installment.

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1. “Logging Railroads” by William D. Middleton. 2007, *Encyclopedia of North American Railroads*, Indiana University Press, pp. 624-628.
2. Ibid.
3. Coleman, Matt. *The Model Railroader’s Guide to Logging Railroads*. 2008, Kalmbach Publishing.
4. Middleton, op. cit.
5. Ibid.
6. Coleman, op. cit.
7. Ibid.

Golden Era Classics



Making the grade at Irondale — A well-framed vertical photograph can convey a sense of drama, as evidenced by this photo of a Southern Railway freight pulling the grade out of Irondale, Alabama en route to Birmingham's Finley Yard. Mid-South member Matt Lawson was there to capture the action in the late 1940s during the final days of Southern steam.



From the Observation Platform

Commentary by John Browning, Mid-South Chapter President

I hope this finds you well and that you are enjoying your summer. The extra daylight that summer brings is really nice, whether you use it for sports, recreation, gardening or perhaps a little train watching.

As all of you are aware, we had to cancel our annual chapter cookout in May due to the threat of bad weather. We are going to try something a little different this month. We are planning to combine a chapter luncheon with our regularly scheduled meeting. The chapter will be furnishing barbeque for this event. We are asking everyone to bring their favorite dish to share. We will need drinks, ice, baked beans, potato salad or your favorite dish or dessert. So that we can get a head count for the event, please let me know no later than Thursday, July 11 if you will be able to attend and what you wish to bring.

After sharing a good meal, we will hold our 2nd annual chapter calendar photo contest. Be sure and dig out those great photos that you have taken over the years and enter them in the contest. Mid-South member Ron Mele has offered to coordinate the contest and will email photo guidelines to the membership.

Speaking of our calendar photo contest, the board has discussed having a vertical format calendar for 2015. This should provide us with a very eye-catching calendar with a format that is not quite so run of the mill. As you are out taking train pictures this year, keep in mind that you might want to shoot a few in vertical format.

Wrapping up on Saturday, we will be treated to a short slide presentation featuring photographs from the collection of Mid-South member Mark Lawson, formerly of Birmingham and now retired and living in Alaska. Mark was shooting in the late 1940s and captured many unique views of both steam and diesel railroading in the Birmingham District. This is one group of photos you'll surely want to see.

Several items were discussed at our June Board of Directors meeting. We are considering the purchase of the chapter's own Internet domain name and the creation of our own web site. We are looking for volunteers interested in helping create and maintain a high quality, regularly updated web site. If you are interested in working on this project, please let me or one of the other board members know of your interest. We have also formed an official archives committee to catalog and maintain the chapter's growing collection of photographs, books, railroad paperwork and other items. This committee is being chaired by Marvin Clemons. Other archive committee members selected to serve are David Coombs and Dr. Carl Marbury.

We are working on getting a high speed Internet connection at the Depot. This will give us the ability to have our current ATCS train location information shared with other rail fans around the country. We are also adding a voicemail system where meeting announcements and other chapter information can be made available 24 hours a day to anyone calling in. The callers will also be able to leave messages requesting information or assistance.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the July picnic and meeting. If you are interested in volunteering to help with any of the chapter projects, please let us know. This is YOUR chapter and we need input and help from everyone to make it a success. Until next time....

2013 Mid-South Chapter Meetings & Events

- Saturday, July 13 — Mid-South Chapter BBQ & 7 Photo Contest — Leeds Depot — Noon
- Saturday, August 31 — Mid-South Chapter Board Meeting—Leeds Depot — 10AM
- Saturday, September 14 — Mid-South Chapter Meeting — Leeds Depot — 2PM
- Saturday & Sunday, September 21-22 — Chapter Open House & John Henry Celebration
- Saturday, October 26—Mid-South Chapter Board Meeting — Leeds Depot — 10AM
- Saturday, November 9 — Mid-South Chapter Meeting — Leeds Depot — 2PM
- December (date & time TBA) — Mid-South Chapter Holiday Social — Leeds Depot