



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Arkansas Railroader



VOLUME 7 NUMBER 1

JANUARY  
1976

A WORD FROM YOUR NEW EDITOR: This is the first news letter written by your new editor. I feel it is both an honor and a pleasure to endeavor to get out the letter, especially in this our Bicentennial year. There are some big shoes for me to endeavor to fill in following your former editor and now our President, WALTER WALKER. Walter always had the letter filled with newsy items and made it very well worth while reading. I will do my best to follow the same pattern and this will be possible only with your cooperation. Since retiring from the COTTON BELT I am at home the greater part of the time. You can phone me at 666-5621 or send items to my home which is 5007 Hawthorne Road, Little Rock, 72207, or send them to our P.O. Box 5584, Little Rock, 72205. Thanks very much and a HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL.

Bill Merck

DECEMBER, 1975 MEETING : Congratulations to Ruby Holt for the fine party at the Officers Club at the Pine Bluff Arsenal on the evening of December 13th. Although the attendance was rather small (Your editor counted 15 people) everyone had a very enjoyable evening. The food was excellent as well as the program, which was given by our own Gene Hull who acted as both operator and narrator in showing color slides of the Colorado and New Mexico trip made by him and Naomi exploring abandoned narrow gauge roadbeds. Your editor and wife, assisted by Annette and Walter Walker, will have the 1976 Christmas Party. Already plans are in the making for what we hope will be an enjoyable evening.

JANUARY MEETING: Regular monthly business meeting will be held on Sunday, January 11, 1976 at 2:00 P.M. in the lounge of the new Missouri Pacific Building, 1000 West 4th St., North L. R. The program will be given by our own Bill Bailey who will talk on "Railroad Communications Thru The Western Union Telegraph Company". This should be very interesting, and trust our attendance will be good.

DUES: Don't forget - Dues for 1976 are now due and payable. They are \$5.00 for club membership, \$3.00 for associate (non-resident), and an additional \$4.50 for N.R.H.S. dues. Our Treasurer, C. R. (Dick) Byrd will be on hand at the meeting to accept your dues or they may be sent to Dick at 12 Flintwood, Little Rock, 72205.

A BIT OF THIS AND THAT: The national nonprofit organization working for a better environment KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL has awarded its top industry award for 1975 to the Burlington Northern R.R. for the reclaiming of more than 1,000 acres of semiarid rangeland which had been surface-mined for coal between 1924 and 1958.

## ARKANSAS RAILROADER - JANUARY, 1976

Two railroads are making a study at the present time of operating caboosless trains, which if successful will join Florida East Coast R. R. which has been caboosless for the past few years. Missouri Pacific and Illinois Central Gulf are both researching this subject; in fact I. C. G. has already begun a twice-daily 6-hour Chicago-St. Louis mini-piggyback service keyed to 10-car caboosless trains handled by two or three-man operating crews. This TOFC schedule is less than half the time of the previous ICG Chicago-St. Louis piggy back schedule and the \$125.00 ramp-to-ramp trailer rate is less than half of the old tariff. Time marches on

AMTRAK president, Paul H. Reistrup being under the impression that he owes his customers "the best passenger-train technology in the world" (which is highly commendable) has taken his quest to Sweden where he has found an electric locomotive which produces as much horse-power but weighs less than half as much and rides on fewer axles than its American counterpart. Amtrak has taken a six-month lease on a demonstrator which should be test rolling in the United States sometime in the summer of this year.

THE AMERICAN FREEDOM TRAIN, plagued by problems at the outset, registered a dramatic turnaround by the end of 1975. The American Freedom Train Foundation, Inc. reports a change in the financial color pattern of the train from red to black. Operating on a 14-hour schedule with the capability of accommodating 16,000 visitors, the Train is now meeting the day-to-day cost of operation and already more than two million persons have visited the traveling display of American history. It is estimated that a total of eight million persons will have seen it during the approximately 510 display days scheduled for it. Your editor received a rumor that ex-SP 4449 will power the train to Little Rock and the ex-TP loco being put in running order will power the train only in Texas. At the present time this cannot be verified as to its truthfulness.

It is not too early to start working on another rail excursion in 1976 for our club. We may not ever find another one that did it in such grand style as did the AD&N. I am advised the P&NW wants us and we could explore the possibility of the L&NW, the A&LM, the D&R and others. Also, who among us would not want to ride behind No. 4501 again ??? That trip in 1974 from Memphis to Corinth was one to remember. Your editor is very enthusiastic about such trips so please excuse his rattlings if I get too much that way.

The following article was sent to your editor by Gene Hull. This article is one mailed out by the Southern Railway to all National Railway Historical Society Chapters, so be sure and be "glued" to the TV set for this interesting movie:

"We are pleased to advise that the two-part, four-hour television movie, Eleanor and Franklin, depictin the lives and times of Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt, will premier nationally on the ABC-TV Network on Sunday, January 11, and continue on Monday, January 12, at 9 P. M. EST each night. The very moving funeral train scenes, as well as many campaign scenes, were filmed with Engine 4501 (authentically renumbered 1409) and a consist of Southern steam equipment representing the funeral train as it was run in April, 1945. This showcase production is being sponsored by IBM. Reports from the preview in Hollywood indicates it is one of the finest productions in a long time. We will appreciate it if you will get a notice to your members and other interested groups concerning this showing for they will be interested not only in the great train scenes but in the entire picture.

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization that meets the second Sunday of each month in the Missouri Pacific Office Building, 1000 West 4th, N. L. R. For information write P. O. Box 5584, L. R. , 72205.