

# *THE SWITCHLIST*

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## April Meeting

*It is often the situation when we have a member's night that there is an abundance of riches. Sometimes, as in our January meeting, we don't get to view everything because of an equipment deficit. To remedy this, we are going to have a Member's Night Part 2. Dick Buchan will share the images that he's loaded onto a CD, and it can safely be assumed that we'll all get to view some scenes that are new to us. You'll want to be with us for this special evening on Tuesday 12 April.*

*Our meeting will be at our usual venue, Red Hot and Blue at 6615 Falls of the Neuse Road in the Falls Village Shopping Center on the west side of the road. It is 2.4 miles southwest of I-540 and 3.5 miles northeast of I-440 (exit 8). If you are coming from I-440, you will find it much easier to turn right onto Sandy Forks Road, the second road after Millbrook, then left into the Falls Village parking lot. Our meeting room is reserved from 6:00 PM, but is typically available around 5:30 PM. After dinner together, the program will begin at 7:00 PM.*

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## March Meeting Report

Our own Vince Reh once again brought many amazing and fascinating views from Cuba with the stories behind them. We got to see some of the last of steam on sugar mill lines along with an astounding variety of diesel locomotives from a host of countries. Woven together with Vince's recollections of the people and situations he encountered, we got a unique look at railroading in this southern neighbor.

One unanticipated lesson was how "full employment" is provided by the Cuban government to its people. Every locomotive, caboose, etc. had a crew that overflowed. Where there would be at most two or three employees in the United States, there were ten to twenty in Cuba!

Thanks again, Vince! We look forward to your next show!

# OF INTEREST

**Amtrak and Sounder** trains on the line north of Seattle have seen their schedules devastated by mud slides this winter and early spring. While this is the season for such events, 2010-11 has set a new record, with more than 100 slides over BNSF tracks. Most of the slides struck between Seattle and Everett, Washington, where the track occupies a right-of-way between a towering cliff and Puget Sound.

Amtrak's Cascade Service Talgo trains between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia have been cancelled frequently, as have Sounder commuter trains. The Seattle section of the *Empire Builder* has been turning at Everett, with buses taking passengers to and from Seattle. While the frequent slides have impacted BNSF freight schedules, passenger trains are impacted more, since a 48-hour passenger train moratorium is imposed for safety purposes following a mudslide.

Modifying the terrain is technically feasible, but implementing such an approach would involve getting environmental approvals. Ultimately, the railroad will be compelled to do so.

**Portland, Oregon** has one of the more extensive and successful light rail and trolley systems in the United States, and they continue to expand the system. Now they have won a \$10.2 million Federal Transit Administration grant to help complete work on the east side of Portland. The grant also provides money to purchase on-board energy storage units for some 20 light rail vehicles.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, visiting Portland to make the announcement of the grant said, "President Obama's vision for winning the future by out-building and out-innovating the rest of the world is coming to life right here in Portland."

**High-Speed Rail** in Florida, we reported last month, was faced with both opposition by the new governor and bipartisan support by many across the state. Now it is genuinely dead, according to ardent supporters. Democratic Senator Bill Nelson had hoped to convince Amtrak to throw together a last-minute bid to build the project in partnership with local governments, but Amtrak said there was not enough time.

**North Carolina** Republican legislators have proposed shutting down work on improvements to passenger rail service between Raleigh and Charlotte. The state had just recently reached a deal with Norfolk Southern that cleared the way for federal high speed rail dollars to expand capacity and improve travel times. Despite the strong ridership on the trains on this line, Rep. Ric Killian and six colleagues filed legislation to kill the proposal and turn back the state's \$461 million federal grant. The legislation is unlikely to become law, as Governor Bev Perdue supports expanded rail service.

"This is money coming into the state that allows us to improve the rail system in a way we would not have been able to do on our own," said Chrissy Pearson, Perdue's communications director. "It will make the state more attractive to business. This money from the feds points directly to putting people back to work."

Republican governors in Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin have succeeded in shutting down work on high or higher speed rail projects in their states.

# Station Bulletin Board

**Dallas, Texas** was served until 1948 by trains of the Texas Electric Railway that traveled to many points in Northern Texas. When operations ceased, several of the stations were converted to other uses, and several were preserved as museums. The terminal/office building in Dallas survived as offices, but the shops building stood vacant for years. Its size called for a significant tenant, but none emerged. Fortunately, patience prevailed and DART, the area's light rail system saw the shops building as ideal to fill their need for a transit police headquarters building. A well-considered conversion has been completed, with the police moving in on 21 March 2011.

Art & Lynette Peterson plan on riding the light rail this June; they'll report with photos of the shops building later this year.

**Newtown Square, Pennsylvania** in 1895 saw the Philadelphia & Delaware County Railroad complete its 9.92 mile long branch line from Fernwood. A passenger station was erected along with a freight station. Only the freight station has survived on what became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad, but it has been nicely restored and serves as a museum. A Pennsylvania Railroad coach dating from 1902 was donated in 1975 by the Henry Ford Museum in Detroit. Restoration is in progress. A restored class N8 cabin car (caboose to non-Pennsy fans) is also on the property.

**Woodsboro, Maryland** on the former PRR Frederick branch, also has a surviving PRR structure. The first agency station in Woodsboro was in the Woodsboro warehouse from 1870, when the Frederick and Pennsylvania Line Rail Road arrived. It, along with the post office, remained there until 1883. By that time the Pennsylvania had taken over, and they built a typical board-and-batten combination station.

From 1883 to 1948 the Woodsboro station served as a passenger stop. All the town's mail arrived by train, quite commonplace in those days of two mail deliveries a day. If you lived in Woodsboro and wanted more than a grade school education, you would have to take the train to Frederick. Woodsboro's unique contribution to express shipments was goldfish in special cans.

After the last passenger run, the station continued to serve as a freight agency; there were active quarries that generated business. Eventually the station was served by a traveling freight agent; it was closed on 1 October 1962. It sat abandoned until 1970, when an individual attempted to move his insurance business there. After a short-lived restoration attempt, it sat neglected again until 1976, when the Woodsboro Bicentennial Committee opened the station for the nation's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Committee eventually became the Woodsboro Historical Society and opened the station to the public in 1986 for the town's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 1986 the Historical Society began raising funds to purchase the station from Maryland's MTA, and in November 1997 completed the purchase. What they got was a very neglected, very dilapidated building. Their first task was replacement of the roof. After fabricating replacement rafters, a local contractor installed a new standing seam tin roof. Other work has seen a massive honeybee nest removed, a new foundation poured and insulation installed. Meanwhile, the Walkersville Southern RR is restoring the rail line from the south, with plans to bring excursion trains to Woodsboro.