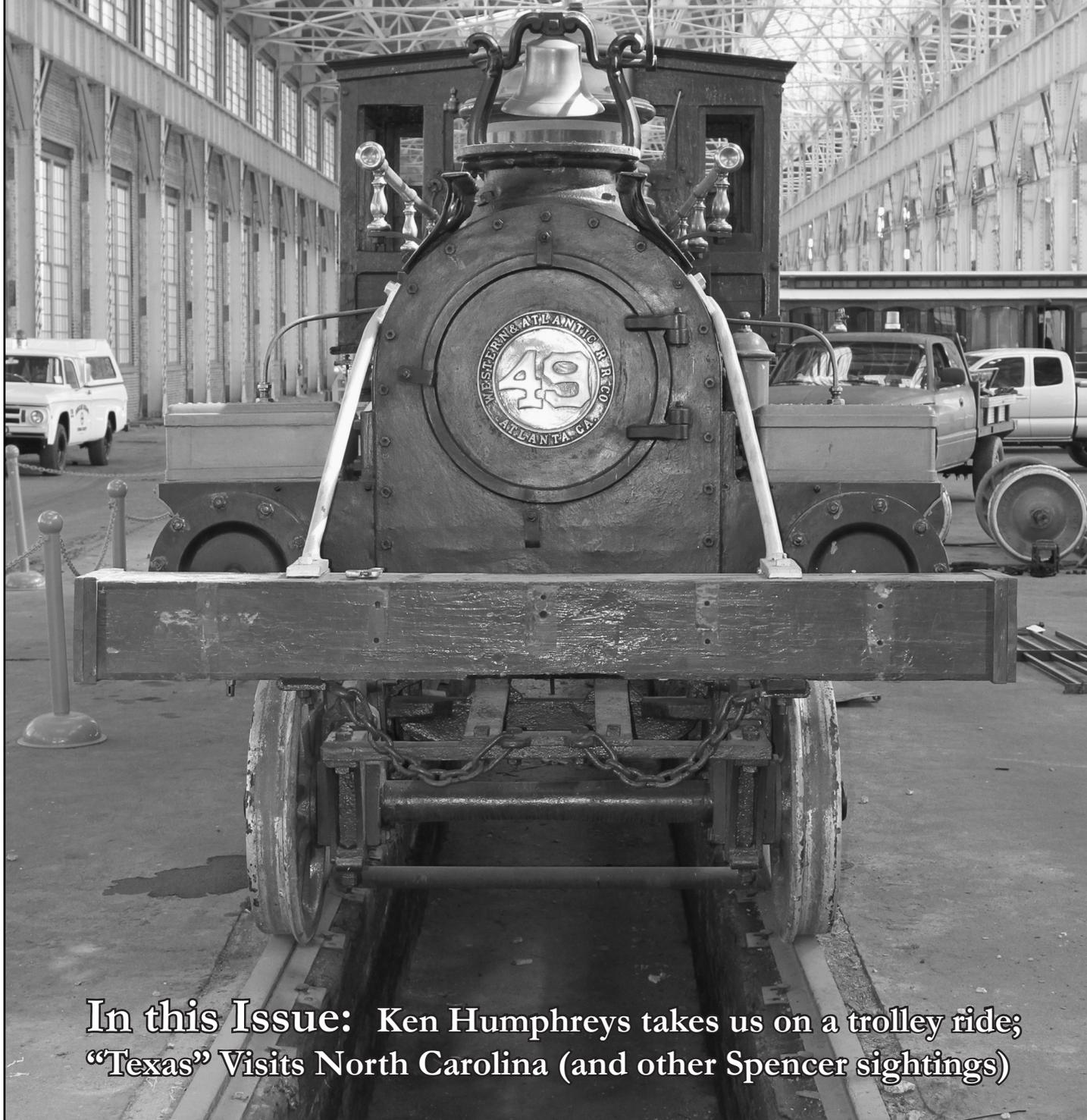


The Piedmont and Western Railroad Club

April 2016



The Bulletin



In this Issue: Ken Humphreys takes us on a trolley ride;
"Texas" Visits North Carolina (and other Spencer sightings)



THE PIEDMONT & WESTERN RAILROAD CLUB
THE OLD ROCK SCHOOL, 400 W. MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 513, VALDESE, NC 28690

TIM SKIDMORE, PRESIDENT; GRANT ROBBINS, VICE-PRESIDENT; GENE AUSTIN, TREASURER, ALAN COLEMAN, SECRETARY AND BULLETIN EDITOR, KEN HUMPHREYS, WEB MASTER, KEVIN STINE, OPERATIONS CHAIRMAN.

THE BULLETIN IS THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE P&WRR. ALL OPINIONS ARE SOLELY THOSE OF THE EDITOR OR CITED CONTRIBUTORS.



ON THE COVER: Long exhibited in the basement of Atlanta's Cyclorama building (1927-2015), the "Texas" is now at Spencer for a cosmetic restoration. See page 6 for more details and images.

All photographs in this issue, with the exception of the Ken Humphreys image, are by the editor.

Next P&W Business Meeting: Thursday May 5, 2016 - 7:30PM at the Old Rock School



Dr. Ben Garrou built the HO scale Asheville clock tower after learning a thing or two about clock towers as part of the Valdese committee which created the town's 1:1 scale version.

Piedmont & Western Railroad Club April 2016 Minutes

The meeting was called to order on April 7, 2016 at 7:37 PM by President Tim Skidmore.

Members in Attendance: Tim Skidmore, Gene Austin, Bill Poteat, Larry Weed, Josh Garrison, Keith Garrison, Jeff Whisenant, Frank Steele, Kevin Stine, Dick Miller, Mike Outen's Jr. & Sr., Reggie Stroud, Garrett Jackson, Michael Devore, and Alan Coleman.

Financial Report: Treasurer Gene Austin reported that with all first quarter dues paid, we have a balance of \$1,655.20 in our treasury. Donations from the public were \$55.00 of the \$230.00 balance increase for the month of March.

Wiring and Track Report: Tim reported that he and Bill had a busy day last week installing power to all the cabinets, updating the system software to Windows 7; installing JMRI and TrainBrain. We will have both 12 and 4 to 5-volt DC power buses for scale lighting, with variable timing for building interiors. The wiring plan remains unchanged, Tim outlined need Tortoise replacements: the Asheville Yard, e.g. Tower-end turnout to track 2;, the elevator end crossover, and the bridge-end of Marshall main line. Jeff added the Carpal Tunnel turnout to the list of needed repairs.

Scenery Report: Frank continues work on new structures for the Hot Springs expansion area; Jeff is working on Snow Bird and a retaining wall for the logging trestle, Alan is working on a coal-fired power plant for Sylva. Larry inquired about progress on the Tennessee River area.

Old Business: Tim recounted the usual list of projects, in particular the need for the back steps handrail installation. Mike Jr. reported that he has completed fabrication of the needed tubing, Tim called for all of us to help with trash take-out mopping, etc.- all things that Ben Garrou quietly performed over the years and we all usually failed to notice.

New Business: said that he will call some long-absent members. Dick Miller read a Jesse Koski-penned note on operations from Dick's early days in the club, reminding us all of the joys of operating sessions. Kevin introduced our newest member, Michael Devore. Michael is the grandson of a Southern Railway employee, a 16-year member of the Asheville modular club and enjoys in weathering rolling stock. Welcome, Michael!

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Minutes submitted by Alan Coleman

A Few Words of Caution

Gene Austin forwarded this rather scary April 5 e-mail from Jim King of Smoky Mountain Model Works. While many of our readers have read this, it is presented for those who have 611 trackside plans this Sunday...

Jerry Ledford and I got stopped by NS police in Old Fort loops this afternoon after being reported by 2 hi-rail trucks that passed us in Graphite. We weren't on the track, just talking with the land owner about the area's history. A white, unmarked Crown Vic pulled up as we were walking out with him and a burly NS cop, in uniform and brandishing a notepad, asked us what we were doing on RR property. He didn't recognize the guy we were with, the land owner, until he spoke up. The cop's attitude changed immediately and we slowly walked to the car while they went elsewhere to investigate a complaint he had about the RR leaving trash on his property. If he'd not been with us, we would likely have been given a citation. Cops are patrolling that area much more than we'd seen before. Not sure if it's because of impending 611 trip. Doesn't make sense to be patrolling the Loops on a Tuesday.

DO NOT go walking on or near the track ANYWHERE. If you're tagged by a train crew or hi-rail guys, you WILL be

reported and, if caught on RR right of way, you can be arrested on the spot. Stay in public areas only ... DON'T test your luck because it won't work. Only by God's grace were we with the land owner at the time ... we had planned to scout another spot and would have surely been caught. It's not worth the photos and we've redone our entire photo plans for Sunday.

On top of that, we got shot at by another land owner in Black Mountain ... and we were on a public highway. 1st shot was close enough to make our ears ring and hear the gravel around us move. Sounded like a small caliber rifle, maybe a scatter gun and the pellets fell around us. The 2nd shot was near us but not aimed at us. Might have been a pot grower firing warning shots. There are several houses on that road and we were not trespassing. Just no fun taking pictures any more. I'm going back to modeling where it's safer!

Jim King





On March 15, Charlotte Trolley No. 85 was moved to the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer as a leased exhibit. P&W Member **Ken Humphreys** recounts what it was like to operate the car on the streets of Charlotte in the pre-Lynx light rail era...



Southern Public Utilities Company built Number 85 in 1927 following the pattern of High-Point-built Perley A. Thomas cars.

Before moving to North Carolina in 1993 I was a long time motorman at the Arden Trolley Museum in Pittsburgh. When I saw a news article that Car 85 was being restored to run in Charlotte's South End, I contacted the Charlotte Museum and volunteered to be a motorman on Car 85. It was a strange car to operate because there was no overhead power line at that time and it was necessary to have a generator car in front of the trolley to provide it with power. Fortunately the generator car was low and did not obstruct the motorman's vision but, after operating trolleys for many years, it was a bit weird to be pushing a car Northbound. There was no turnaround loop or wye at the north end of the line at the Charlotte Convention Center so the car trailed behind us as we returned to the car barn at the old Atherton Mill in the South End.

Because there was only one grade crossing signal and gates at Tremont Street we always had a police officer on the trolley to stop traffic at each of the many grade crossings along the line. It was almost comical at Tremont Street when drivers, usually talking on a cell phone or texting, would be oblivious to the crossing signals and the descending gates with the result that the gates would crash down on their car. I saw this happen at least once a day, often resulting in broken windshields, broken rear windows, or damaged hoods or roofs. One person who was hit by the gate waited until our return trip and argued that we deliberately dropped the gate on his car and demanding that we pay for the damage. The police officer gave him two options: first to shut up and go home or second, to be given a ticket for a moving violation of ignoring a traffic control device. He took the first option.

Later when the light rail system was being installed, CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) took over responsibility for operating the trolley. We volunteers were asked to stay on but were told that if we did we would have to join the CATS union and take a driving test to get a CDL for operating a trolley. How in the world do you take the test for a CDL in a trolley and why should volunteers have to pay union dues? They had no answer to either question and we told them in what part of their anatomy to park the trolley.

I am glad that the car is going to Spencer where she will be taken care of and people can appreciate this historic old trolley.

Ken Humphreys



The TEXAS Restoration Project



Steam has returned to the backshop at Spencer- this time in the form of the *Texas*, famed for its part in “The Great Locomotive Chase” of April 12, 1862. Following a cosmetic restoration at Spencer, this 1856 product of Danforth, Cooke & Co. will be moved to its new home at the Atlanta History Center.

< Project manager Max Sigler points out part of the rust-damaged jacket in need of repair.



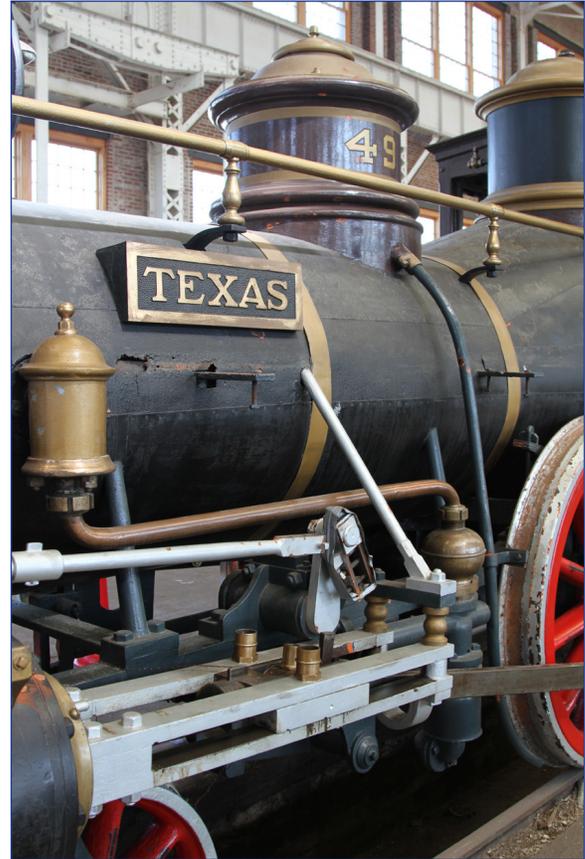
The Texas has seen many changes since its construction 160 years ago, including a new boiler at age twenty and regauging from 5-foot to standard gauge in 1886. The tender was the first component to be stripped down at Spencer...the tenders' wooden frame revealing a mix of oak, pine and maple timbers from well-intended but frugal restorers over the years.



Nuts, bolts, and even the driver tires have a generous coat of orange primer from a previous restoration.



The Texas was rebuilt over a century ago by then-owner Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway prior to its donation to the "Ladies of Atlanta" - 1903 and 1904 tender wheels from that restoration lie next to their brake beam.



A 1937 restoration tried to return the Texas to its 1862 appearance but curiously kept the circa-1866 number of "49" on the sand dome.



Other Spencer Sightings ...



Above, the museum's ACL and SCL-liveried cabooses bask in the sun; below Norfolk Southern Railway's Exhibit car was another March 2015 visitor to the NCTM.



CLOWN GLASSES?

A sad reminder that even good friends can hurt you: NCTM's Southern E-8 No. 6900 seems doomed to wear the unfortunate shiny-rimmed, flush-mounted windshields installed by NS in 2014.

