

The Railway
Historical
Southeast



& Locomotive
Society, Inc.
Chapter

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General Theft Specifically Thwarted

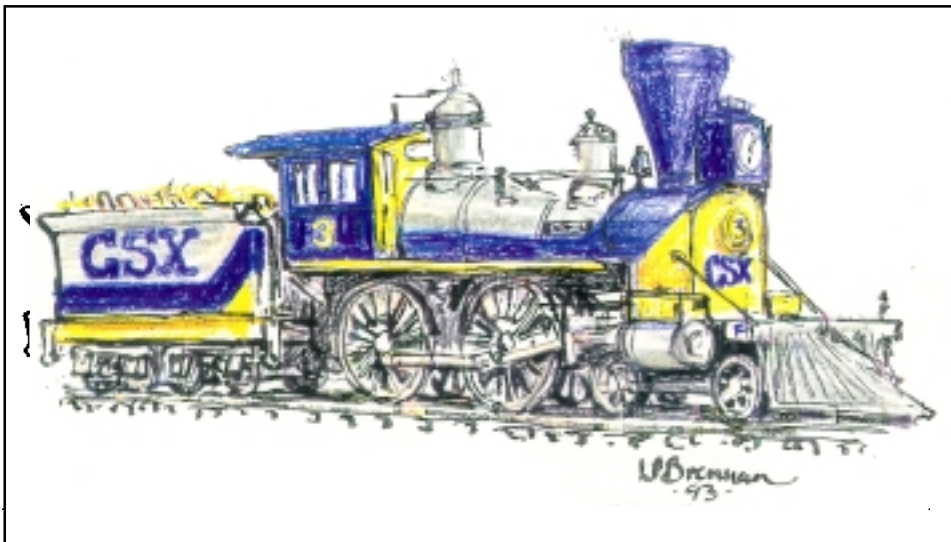
In a daring move reminiscent of the Andrews Raid of 1862, a group of visiting railfans attempted a bold (and stupid) daylight theft of the *General* from its display track in Kennesaw, Georgia.

The criminals showed a certain creativity in their attempt to conceal their crime by painting the engine in a scheme that blended into the CSX rolling stock passing the museum. However, an alert

CSX engineer noticed the lack of MU cables when he attempted to couple the 1854 veteran into a time freight. On closer inspection, it was discovered that the *General's* front coupler was not compatible with other CSX engines. Many other differences were noted, and after several radio conversations with the dispatcher, train master, and road foreman of engines, it was finally determined that this was indeed the missing *General*.

The railfans, when apprehended, proved to be mostly harmless, and, after promising to be good, they were released to return to Jacksonville, sadder, wiser (somewhat) and *General*-less.

—Larry P. Brennan



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Nashville's *Broadway Dinner Train*

If I asked you to name some of the passenger trains that once served Nashville, you'd probably think of L&N and NC&StL limiteds such as the *Pan American*, the *Humming Bird*, the *Dixie Flyer*, and the *City of Memphis*. Most people would not recall the unnamed Tennessee Central trains that provided passenger accommodations on TC's 165.8 mile long main line between Nashville and Harriman, Tennessee.

In the early '40s, night trains #3 (westbound) and #4 (eastbound) each handled a Pullman with a drawing room and 12 sections. The sleeper ran between Nashville and Knoxville with Southern Railway's *Carolina Special* handling the car between Harriman and Knoxville. Daytime locals #1 (westbound) and #2 (eastbound) offered a better look at the scenery across the Cumberland Plateau and featured Buffet-Chair Cars. The Buffet-Chair Cars were gone by the mid-'40s along with the Nashville-Knoxville sleeper line. Night trains #3 and #4 were discontinued by 1949, and day trains #1 and #2 passed from the railroad scene in the mid-'50s. Instead of using Union Station on the western edge of downtown Nashville, the TC passenger trains used TC's much less imposing facility on the east side of town where Broadway meets the Cumberland River.

The Tennessee Central itself was dismembered in 1969 with the railroad being divided up among IC (Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to Nashville), L&N (Nashville to Crossville), and Southern (Crossville to Harriman). Today, the 110.4 mile segment between Nashville and Monterey, and the Old Hickory and Carthage branches are owned by the Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority and operated by Nashville and Eastern Railroad Corp. (N&E).

Back when TC exited the passenger business, who would have imagined that in the 1990s Nashville's only remaining passenger train would be operating over the former TC? Nashville Union Station survives as a trainless hotel, but the former TC station site in Nashville is now home for the *Broadway Dinner Train (BDT)*, a streamlined passenger train that's far more luxurious than any-

thing the struggling TC could have dreamed of operating.

When passengers arrive at *BDT*'s newly constructed ticket office and gift shop, they're greeted by ex-PRR E8 #5764 (built by EMD in 1952) in a burgundy and silver adaptation of L&N's pine tree paint scheme. *BDT*'s Vice President, Gene Turnage, toyed with the idea of using L&N's royal blue and cream colors, but that would have necessitated repainting the burgundy window boards and lettering on the passenger cars. "I had picked burgundy out of the Imron paint catalogue because I thought it would look good on the stainless steel cars." The handsome E unit took over from the leased N&E U30Bs on November 24, 1991, and in addition to providing reliable motive power, it has attracted a surprising amount of walk-in business.

Ex-PRR #5764 still has its two original twelve cylinder engines, and Turnage is happy that UP had VMV of Paducah rebuild three E9s with just one 16 cylinder engine per locomotive. "I was able to buy a ton of parts from the UP E units!" Turnage is also rebuilding ex-PRR E8 #5794 and hopes to lease the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum's B unit to provide a classic A-B-A motive power lash-up.

Behind his E8, Turnage has assembled an impressive consist of stainless steel equipment which includes some very notable survivors from the streamliner era. Ex-Rock Island RPO #514 (built by Budd in 1954 for general service) is not especially glamorous, but it serves a critical role as the *BDT*'s power car. The former RPO now houses a V-12 1710 Cummins diesel engine and a 500 KW 480 volt alternator for head-end power (HEP). The train's leisurely operating speeds make HEP a necessity.

The next car is one of the three Sun Lounges that were built for SAL's *Silver Meteor*. These unique cars had five double bedrooms and "wrap-around" windows in their lounge sections. Sun Lounge *Hollywood Beach* (built by Pullman-Standard in 1956) is owned by Turnage's partner, Dr. Art Cushman, and it's the only car in the train that

doesn't have burgundy window boards and isn't lettered "Broadway." The solid silver car is lettered "Seaboard," and an eye-catching *Silver Meteor* neon sign has been installed above the bar in the lounge section. *Hollywood Beach* can be reserved for private dinners for up to 14 people for \$500. Each person in the group is then charged \$24.50 for his or her meal rather than the normal fare of \$45.00.

The next car had even a more glamorous "first career." Ex-Santa Fe dome lounge #504 (built by Pullman-Standard in 1950) was one of the six famous Pleasure Domes that operated on the all-Pullman *Super Chief*. The Turquoise Room on the lower level is still available for private parties of up to nine people for an extra charge of \$100. The \$100 surcharge covers the cost of providing an additional server.

Ex-ACL #245 was built by Pullman-Standard as a coach, but it has been converted to a 54 seat table car. It's followed by ex-Santa Fe 48 seat diner #1494 (built by Budd in 1942 for general service and later assigned to such famous limiteds as the *Super Chief*, *El Capitan*, and the *Texas Chief*). No. 1494 is followed by a sister car, ex-ATSF 48 seat diner #1493 (also built by Budd in 1942 and assigned to the same trains). The two ex-Santa Fe diners are trailed by an ex-SAL coach, #6205 (built by Budd in 1939 for the *Silver Meteor*), which has been gutted and transformed into a table car.

On the rear of the 8-car train, one finds ex-FEC round end tavern observation *Bay Biscayne* (built by Budd in 1939 for the *Champion*). Turnage has commissioned a neon *Broadway Dinner Train* tail sign which will soon grace the rounded end of *Bay Biscayne*.

Turnage is also refurbishing ex-PRR 52 seat coach #4067. The 4067 will be used as a rider coach for patrons who want to experience the train ride without paying for the dinner. He has also purchased former CB&Q dome #4727, the *Silver Stream* (built by Budd in 1947 for *Twin Zephyr* service). The *Silver Stream* was purchased from Amtrak, and is currently little more than a shell.

The *BDT* begins boarding at 6:30 pm and departs promptly at 7:00 pm. Turnage laments that one of his most vexing problems is the occasional passenger who shows up after the train has departed. "Some people are accustomed to arriving at restaurants 10 or 15 minutes late and still get-

ting fed, but if they miss this train, they also miss dinner." Food has to be purchased for each person who makes a reservation, and patrons are clearly advised that "no-shows" will not receive refunds. Even so, some of the folks who miss the train get very irate about paying for their uneaten meals.

With *BDT*'s "no refund" policy etched in our consciousness, my group arrives at the platform at 6:20 on Friday evening, July 23rd. At boarding time, we're directed into table car #245. Outside the temperature is still in the mid-90s, but on board the train, it's delightfully cool. Some of the "old ways" of operating passenger trains are missed, but HEP for heating and cooling passenger trains is a great improvement that should be applauded by everyone. Tonight's crowd is fairly light, and our table car and diner #1494 are the only regular dining cars in use. There's also a small private party in the Turquoise Room in ex-ATSF #504.

The *BDT* makes regular runs on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings during most of the year with service reduced to just Saturday nights in January, February, and March. The train has a capacity of 206 in the four regular dining cars, and a total of 23 people can be accommodated in *Hollywood Beach* and the Turquoise Room. The train is usually about 60% full on Thursdays and Fridays with sellouts on Saturdays. On the Saturday following my ride, the *BDT* will make its regular run and then make a special charter trip for a group from Fisk University. With such charters and Operation Lifesaver specials for school children, the *BDT* averages three and one-half to four trips per week from April through December. In 1992, the *BDT* carried around 26,000 passengers.

Tonight we'll cover just 16 and one-half miles of the old TC. The *BDT* goes east nine miles over the old TC main to Stones River then runs north to the DuPont plant at the end of the Old Hickory Branch. Our E8 will push the train back nine-tenths of a mile to the wye at Southern Junction. The locomotive will then run around the wye and hook onto the tail end of tavern observation *Bay Biscayne*. After pulling us to Old Hickory, the former Pennsy E unit will run around the wye near the DuPont plant and couple back onto the ex-Rock Island power car. On the return trip, the E8 will pull us all the way into the station at Riverfront Park in Nashville. Although the loco-

motive is wye'd twice during the trip, the cars are never turned.

Ex-PRR #5764 is still geared for a maximum speed of 98 mph, but with a 33 mile roundtrip that has to last long enough to serve dinner, we won't even be running at the 30 mph maximum allowed on N&E's Class 2 track. The *BDT* normally operates between 20 and 25 mph, and the roundtrip takes about two and one-half hours.

Just because of the leisurely pace of the trip, don't think the E unit doesn't have to work. There's a two mile long 2% grade in each direction with the crest at mile seven and one-half. Turnage said several "experts" told him that his single E unit couldn't handle an eight car train on a 2% grade, but he soon found that with the throttle in the 8th notch, the veteran passenger engine would walk the train over the hill at a steady 25 mph.

Turnage has an excellent relationship with N&E and pays the railroad a percentage of his gross revenue as a trackage rights fee. The *BDT* operates on track permits in absolute blocks and uses N&E block #1 between Nashville and Stones River and block #2 between Stones River and Old Hickory. In the five years since he began operating on December 1, 1988, Turnage has had only one major operating snafu. A N&E derailment prevented the *BDT* from getting back to Nashville one evening, and the passengers had to be bused back to Music City.

Turnage is pleased with the current dinner train route over N&E, but there is some talk about constructing a one and one-half mile spur into Opryland.

The train leaves promptly at 7:00 pm, and the dining car crews are already hard at work making an inventory of everyone's entree. Turnage's wife, Diane, is also busy in her role as Train Chief. Passengers have already chosen from three entrees: prime rib, Chicken Cordon Bleu, and Shrimp Creole. Drinks are ordered and soon hot soup is arriving. My salad and prime rib are good as is the Glen Ellen Cabernet Sauvignon. Also, everyone seems to enjoy dessert in the form of an exceedingly rich chocolate fudge cake.

Turnage has used three different caterers since the *BDT* began operations. The first one ran a wonderful four star restaurant but couldn't master the challenge of providing the food for a din-

ner train operation. The hot food is brought aboard the train in bulk in thermal caddies so meals are not "plated" beforehand as they are for airlines. On a full night, the train crew consists of the Conductor, the Engineer, a Brakeman, the Train Chief, and 13 Servers/Bartenders.

Turnage is cognizant of the realities of operating a dinner train in the 1990s. "We're not a restaurant; we're a train that serves food. We can't get too fancy or roll a big dessert cart down the aisle." A dinner train serving up to 229 people also can't recreate the seven-course King's Dinner that was featured on IC's all-Pullman *Panama Limited* or the Gulf Coast Seafood Platter or Country Ham Breakfast that once delighted patrons on L&N dining cars. The *BDT* serves good basic food however, and the servers are cheerful, courteous, and efficient.

Coffee is served with dessert and various after dinner liqueurs are also available. I enjoy a miniature of Grand Marnier and then set out to explore the train.

In the former Santa Fe dome car, singer Moncrief Williams is entertaining a lounge full of people. Turnage notes that finding such entertainers is definitely not a problem in Nashville. A wealth of talent is available, and he has a waiting list of ten other singers who would love to perform on the *BDT*. Tavern observation *Biscayne Bay* is also set up to accommodate a performer when the train is full. Believe it or not, the *BDT* even has an on-train magician who will perform at your table in the dining car!

Quite a few passengers have opted to go top side to take in the nighttime scenery, and every seat in the dome is occupied. Several other explorers have gone forward to inspect *Hollywood Beach*, and Turnage is graciously fielding their questions about the Sun Lounge's heritage. Standing in the beautifully restored lounge brings back good memories of a Washington-Jacksonville trip I made in December of 1966 aboard Seaboard's *Silver Meteor*.

Our 9:30 arrival in Nashville comes more quickly than I'd like, and everyone seems to have enjoyed their unusual dining experience. I regret that instead of detraining, I can't retire to one of *Hollywood Beach's* double bedrooms for a good night's sleep enroute to Knoxville!

—Lyle Key

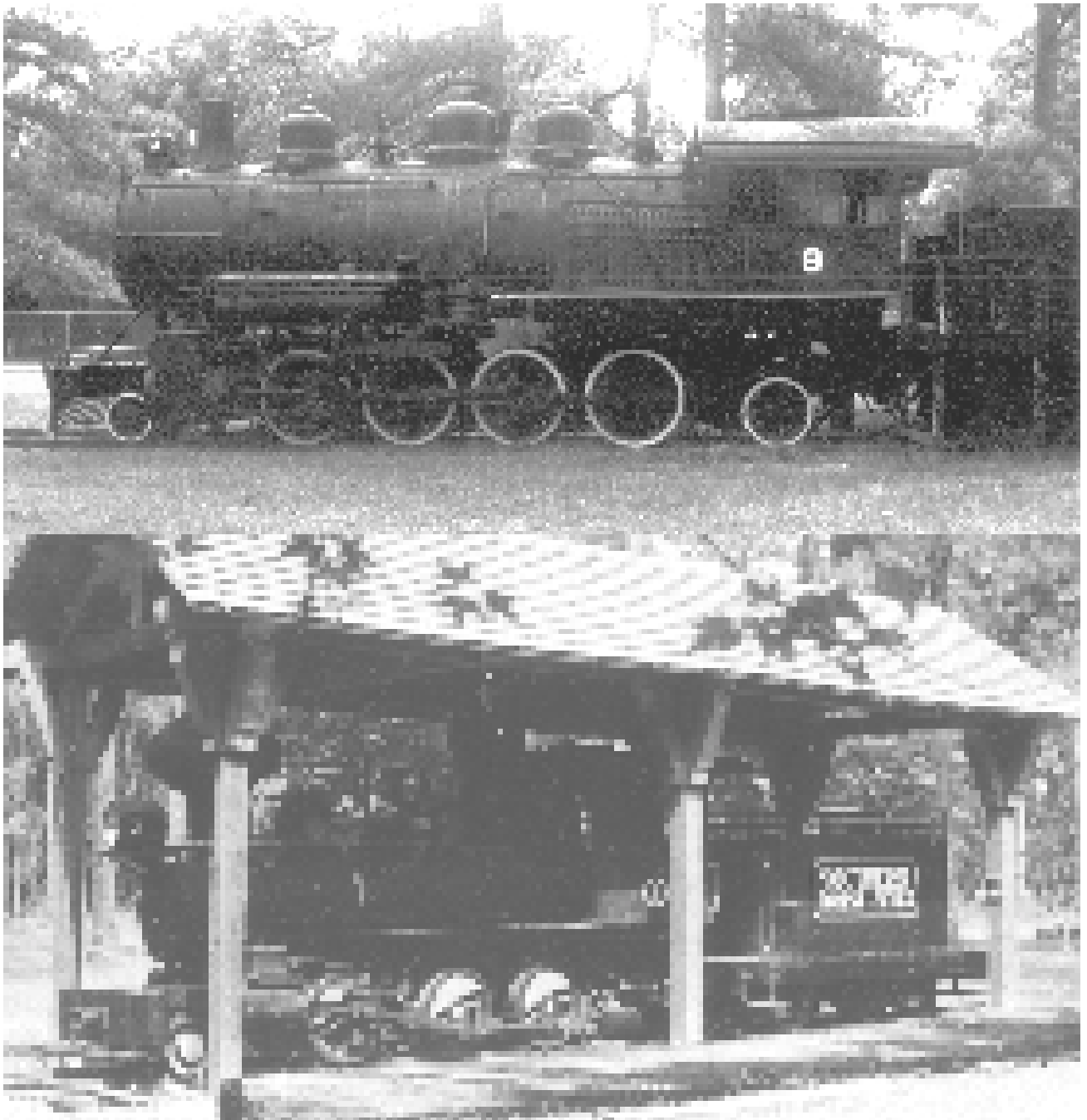
Waycross Trip - Sept. 7

What are two railfans doing on a museum trip organized by Mr. Jim Garner of the Clay County Historical Society? Just tagging along because it was mostly railroad oriented. If you have seen the "Bud Hess Collection" consisting of a completely restored cabooses and station located on their grounds at Green Cove Springs, you would know why. Paul Mueller of that group invited Arby Vandenbossche and me Editor along for the out-

ing. The three of us are also members of the Gateway Model Railroad Club. We rode to Waycross by private autos (three) stopping in Hilliard to admire the restored depot there.

At the Okefenokee Heritage Center we met with Mr. John Carew, curator, for a tour through the museum, which had a nice display of Walt Kelly's office furnishings he used to create *Pogo*,

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*Okefenokee Chief #9 stands in the Georgia sun while the Southern Forest Flyer #3 enjoys the shade.
Photos by Cliff Vander Yacht*

Auto Train Tour - Sept. 11

No, the AMD-103s aren't as big as they look, in fact, they're just 14'6" tall, but the monocoque frame makes them look big. They are 4000 horsepower each. But you can get all this information elsewhere. What you can't get elsewhere is a ride in the cab. The usual mixed group of North Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society members lead by able Arby Vandenbossche, plus ~~the~~ Editor, took an Amtrak Auto Train tour.

The nineteen of us left at 6:00 AM by bus for the Sanford facility. The Auto Train facility is next door to the regular Amtrak station at Sanford; however, it is a bit more complex. Amtrak must be able to fix most problems with both engines and cars at this site, so there are both servicing and light repair shops located here. The shops are small, but rather versatile.

What stirred our interest first was the unloading of the auto carriers. As each car was driven to the Auto Train passenger station, the magnetically attached number was called out to the waiting owners. We then boarded an ex-Milwaukee Road dome diner for a bit of information on the facilities by our host, Mr. Lovette, Mechanical Manager. While there, the string of cars we were in was pulled through the car washing rack (a shower of soap, whirling brushes and two showers of clear water). We then took a walking tour of the rest of the facility.

After lunch, we entered into what was to be the trailing cab of the next departing motive power. The cabs are spacious with three seats. Although the forward windows are small in size, they are close to the engineer due to the design of the blunt-nosed unit, so

his vision ahead is not impaired. Everyone, including our bus driver, had a ride about three hundred yards up and down the track. Mr. Lovette remarked that we were probably the first railfan group to have cab rides in these new locomotives. We waited for the engines to be washed and sent on their way to couple-up the train before we headed back to Jacksonville. We didn't wait the two hours necessary for the train to depart in order to chase it as originally planned.

—Cliff Vander Yacht



AMD-103 #812, the host of our cab ride, is shown here with #815. Photo by Cliff Vander Yacht.

Waycross Trip – continued

plus the outdoor display of former Rockton & Rion Mikado #9, a baggage/mail car, a passenger car and an ACL caboose. Next door at the RESA facility we also saw a narrow gauge 2-6-0. After lunch we watched a string of auto-racks being humped from the "A" tower at CSX's Rice Yard. Due to the lack of safety gear, we were prevented from entering the engine service and repair facilities, but we did get a good look in through the doors.

Not bad for a museum trip!

—Cliff Vander Yacht

1993 R&LHS Board of Directors Meeting

The R&LHS national board of directors met October 3rd, 1993, in Portsmouth, VA. The meeting was held in combination with the annual meeting of the Lexington Group. Some of the items discussed included: a review of proposed amendments to the national bylaws (which will be presented to the general membership at the 1994 national meeting at Pomona, CA.) , continued efforts to increase membership, and a report from our archivist, Jacki Pryor.

It was resolved that the R&LHS would *not* continue to pursue the development of a stand-alone archive. Rather, we'll continue to work with existing museums (such as our Sacramento operation with the California State Railroad Museum). The archival committee will continue their efforts to find a substitute location to display the material now stored at Muncy, PA.

—Jim Smith

Coming Events

1993 Nominations for Officers

Any current member interested in running for an officer position of the Southeast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society should contact Mark Bennett (359-1929), Larry Brennan (383-8688), or Jim Smith (276-2972). Nominations must be received by our November 11th meeting so elections can be held in December. The following positions will be elected: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All members are encouraged to give this notice serious consideration.

November 11th Meeting

Our first order of business will be to finalize our Southeast Chapter slate of officers for 1994. Nominations will then be closed so elections can be held in December. The program will consist of John Humes showing some more of his Northeast Video and Jim Smith talking about his recent duty as a trainman in the West Virginia coal fields. Finally, we'll continue our slide collection sale. So come on out and take part in the fun and fellowship on November 11th!

Special December 4th Field Trip

As discussed at the October meeting, the Southeast Chapter will make a field trip to the Okefenokee Swamp on December 4th. We hope to have as our guide Mr. Chris Trowell, who gave an excellent Okefenokee presentation during our 1992 R&LHS Convention. Our plans, subject to change, begin by meeting at the north parking lot of the CSX building at 7:30AM and then caravanning to the Fargo entrance of the park. We'll then rent a boat(s) and go to Billy's Island to inspect the former railroad activity at that location, Albert the Alligator and the rest of his *Pogo* friends permitting.

December 9th Meeting

We'll announce the results of the Southeast Chapter elections, finalize our plans for our January banquet, and continue our Northeast Railroading slide sale. Our program will be a slide presentation by Barry Baines on the current New Haven area. We'll also show any "snow" slides brought to the meeting. So mark your calendar, dig out some snow slides, and plan to attend our December 9th meeting.

1994 NATIONAL R&LHS CONVENTION

Hosted by the Southern California Chapter

- When: Friday, April 29 to Sunday May 1, 1994.
- Where: Sheraton Suites Fairplex Hotel, Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, Pomona, CA.
- Room Rates: \$79.00 per night, single/double, including breakfast each day and complimentary transportation to/from the Ontario Airport.
- Activities: Special events are now being planned including two inspection tours of new commuter rail routes. A chartered train is planned for Saturday. Combined rail travel during the trips may exceed 325 miles! Side trips will also be offered to nearby rail facilities, famous sites and museums.
- Cost: Typical expenses at our annual meetings has been \$150.00 for activities and all arranged meals.

Slides Wanted . . .

As the Jacksonville area members know, our continuing sale of the slide collection acquired in 1992 has been a great success. Without a doubt, it is a real high-point of our meetings. It now appears that we'll run out of slides in about four months. Since it has been so much fun, we are seeking acquisition of additional slides. Anyone knowing of a collection for sale or if a member is interested in thinning their personal collection, please contact Jim Smith, Bill Howes, or Lloyd Lewis. Thanks!

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