

November 2017

Jim tends to draw new friends wherever he goes and yesterday was no exception. We were railfanning, parked along the tracks in a little Virginia town, when five inquisitive cluckers discovered us.

They followed Jim around the car like puppy dogs, talking to him with the gentle, clucky, twittery, cooey sounds that only happy, contented chickens can make. One hen was searching for grain or a bug or whatever between the rails of track one when a train approached her from behind on track two. She never ruffled a feather and just kept on pecking as the train rumbled past her.

Jim tossed broken crackers over the ground beside our car and the chickens enjoyed the feast. Don't you just know, given just the slightest encouragement, the whole crew probably would have clamored into the car with us?

When the girls had eaten their fill, they decided it was time to go home and they waddled across the parking lot to the edge of the road, then high-tailed it across the blacktop as fast as their scrawny chicken legs would peddle. Somewhere they had acquired the knowledge that it wasn't a safe practice to dawdle on that road.

You've heard the age-old question, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" We now know the answer, "To mooch crackers from Jim."

