



Whistle Stop

Watauga Valley NRHS
P O Box 432 Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleynrhs.org



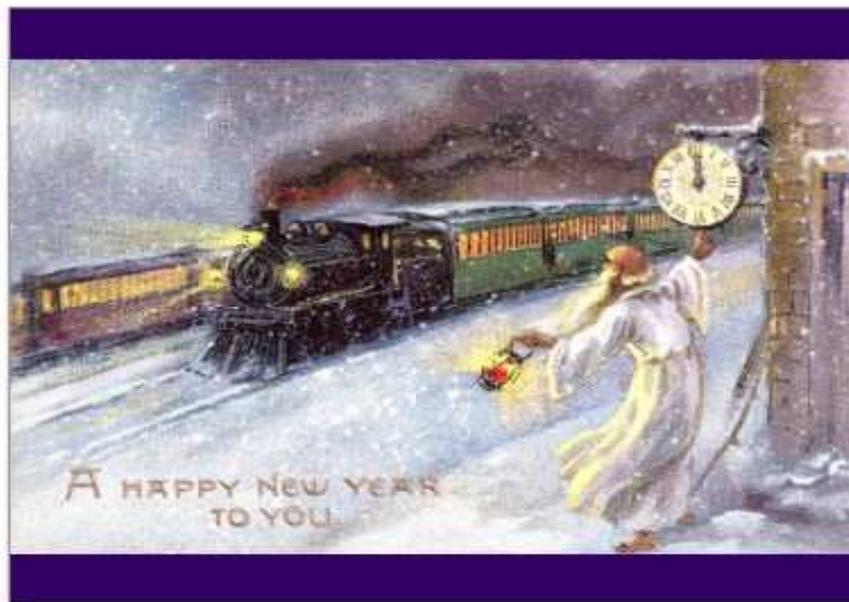
Railroading – Past, Present and Future

Volume 31 No. 1

January 2011

JANUARY 24 CHAPTER MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of Watauga Valley NRHS will be held Monday, January 24, 2011 at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN. Information about our 2011 excursion program will be announced. Changes and additions to the Chapter's by-laws will be reviewed. We look forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting in 2011.



A unique perspective on the passing of time as found on a vintage post card.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not sent in your dues, your membership expired January 1. Please send your dues in ASAP so you will not miss out on your WHISTLE STOP and other Chapter benefits.

Member Notes

by Nancy Jewell

We enter the New Year with members healthy and well. Please call the Chapter phone at (423) 753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918 to send any news that would help us keep in touch. Thanks.

CHAPTER CHRISTMAS DINNER

Even though a snow storm hit Saturday morning just before our Christmas Dinner, we still had 70 members show up. Great food and fellowship topped the event off. Many longtime members enjoyed coming back to the Johnson City American Legion as this was our general membership meeting hall for many years. "Thanks" go out to Helen Calhoun, the event coordinator for the Christmas Dinner. Also Jim Calhoun, Lois Tilley, Penny May, Jo Ann Edwards and Sarah Gibson jumped in and contributed to getting everything ready. Everyone enjoyed this event and had a great time.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

Please bring your railroad book donations to any Membership Meeting or call the Chapter office at (423) 753-5797. Our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library is growing everyday. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good work. We have plenty of room to add more books!

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple

With the bad weather, there was very little activity at the coach yard in the month of December. If you would like to work at the coach yard when the weather breaks, please call (423) 753-5797 and leave a message. We have three cars in the yard at this time: the *CLINCHFIELD* coach has not made it back to Jonesborough yet due to being in service in North Carolina over the Winter season.

PROGRAMS FOR 2011

We need programs for our General Membership Meetings for each month in 2011. If you have any programs, including railroad slides, a video, a DVD, or know of a possible speaker, contact Nick White, the Program Director, at any Chapter meeting; call the chapter phone (423) 753-5797; or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

Steel City

by Gary Price

Working on a traveling tie gang means spending a lot of time away from home, both traveling and working. This is the main reason that I stay on NS T&S20 as the gang mostly stays on the Virginia Division and I rarely have to travel more than 200 miles away from home. This is also a major factor in my decision not to seek promotion, as a supervisor spends more time on the road than hourly employees. The last two years we have worked close to home, so you can imagine our disappointment when a job in Pittsburgh, PA. was moved to our schedule.

I do not care for big cities, I am used to working through small towns and mountains, but I was amazed by the vast network of bridges both rail and highway that you have to traverse to get into Pittsburgh. We made our way through the city streets, by the professional sports stadiums, into NORFOLK SOUTHERN's Island Yards, where our camp cars were located. On Monday, we unloaded the machines that we were going to use on this job and crossed the massive mile long trestle that spans the Ohio River to reach CONRAIL's former "Mon Line" that gets its name because it follows along the Monongahela River.



This was not just any job. It was a special assignment to replace four thousand concrete ties that had disintegrated under the weight of heavy coal trains. Simple task? NO! First of all, our first four machines were useless as concrete ties do not utilize spikes and anchors, so these machines were left on the flat cars. The concrete ties had a metal clip that we had to break manually with a sledge hammer. Second, concrete ties are odd shaped so we had to insert three wooden ties for each concrete tie removed. My machine was

one of the ones left on the flats, so I had to don my leather gloves and labor while we worked these two weeks.

Pittsburgh is definitely a railroad town. During its heyday, around 20 railroads served the area, including the steel mills and passengers. Even today NS, CSX, AMTRAK, and the Union Railroad still have a strong presence in the vast spider web of rails that criss-cross all Three Rivers. I was pleased to see NORFOLK SOUTHERN TrailerTrains up close and personal, and have the opportunity to view several High-Wide loads of heavy-duty Caterpillar equipment. On the lower lever near the river is CSX tracks that are a part of their Gateway Corridor. Right now CSX can only run single stacks, and across the river the UNION RAILROAD services the steel mills that are still in operation around the area. The Port Authority of Allegheny County operates an extensive light rail program on four different routes leading into the city and surrounding areas. Many of the light rail's 5' 2 1/2" gauge rails are located on former routes and bridges of some of the old abandoned railroads in Pittsburgh.

But what caught my interest the most was the "Trains Up In the Sky". Pittsburgh has two historic Incline Railroads. The DUQUESNE INCLINE RWY, and the MONONGAHELA INCLINE RWY, are operating museums that have been in [continued on next page]

service for over 140 years. Pittsburgh at one time had sixteen incline railroads that serviced the higher mountain communities surrounding the city, but with better roads and vehicles they were all phased out except for these two unique pieces of transportation history. The DUQUESNE INCLINE Rwy, commonly referred to as the "Trolley", was placed into service in 1877 and features 400 feet of track, and climbs 800 feet at 30 degrees. At the topside station located on Grandview Street, there is a restaurant and scenic overlook with a spectacular view of the city of Pittsburgh.



The MONONGAHELA the locals as the "Mon", is been placed into service on than the San Francisco NORFOLK SOUTHERN's 635 feet of track and climbs 635 feet at 35 degrees. "Mon" line passes directly beneath both inclines and I of these unique forms of



INCLINE Rwy, known by the older of the two, having May 28, 1870, and is older Cable Cars. It climbs 367 feet at 35 degrees. "Mon" line passes directly was able to get a rare view railroading.

We finished the work in two weeks and loaded up our equipment and headed to Ohio, with fond memories of the Steel City behind us.

New book tells history of the "Railroad that couldn't be built"

A just-published book details the efforts by the state of North Carolina in the nineteenth century to build a railroad across the steep mountains between Old Fort and Ridgecrest. The job was accomplished with brilliant engineering, incredible determination, and convict labor living and dying under horrible conditions. Entitled *"Tunnels, Nitro and Convicts: Building the Railroad that Couldn't Be Built"*, it is written by Marion, NC mayor Steve Little and is published by Author House in Indiana. Chapter members will recognize this line as the route of our recent excursion to Asheville over NS rails. Copies are available for \$15.00 at the *Train Shop* in Marion or from the author by mail (and an additional \$2.50 for S&H) at 20 North Main Street, Marion, NC 28752. Inscription requests will be honored. A more detailed description of the book can be found in the January 13 on-line edition of *The McDowell News*. [Thanks to Jeff Jones for the news tip.]

TACOMA CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO
CASCADE RAILS 2011
NTHS CONVENTION
JUNE 20 - 26, 2011
TACOMA, WASHINGTON



For convention details, go to <http://www.cascaderails2011.com/>

SPRING CHAPTER FIELD TRIP OF 2011

Leave the driving to us as we travel to Chattanooga, TN to tour the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, home of the new stars of the upcoming NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program: SOUTHERN No. 630 and No. 4501 and TVRM No. 610.

Our April 16 trip will feature a tour of Grand Junction and historic railroad equipment on display. We'll take a train ride from Grand Junction to the East Chattanooga TVRM Shop, where we will enjoy an in-depth tour of SOUTHERN No. 630 and No. 4501, which are currently being restored. Then, if time permits, we'll visit the Famous Chattanooga Choo Choo Terminal Station. The station has been converted to a restaurant and mini shops, and 24 vintage railcars, converted to hotel rooms, are on display on the property. After our departure from the Chattanooga Choo Choo, a dinner stop will be made.

The boarding location is the Parsons Table parking lot in Jonesborough, TN.

IF YOU MISSED OUR ROANOKE TOUR, YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS ONE!!

The price is \$36.00 per person, which includes round trip transportation and the TVRM train ride ticket. Meals on are your own nickel. To reserve your seat, please call Nick White at (276) 759-4498; contact him at a Chapter meeting; or email him at nickwhite_@hotmail.com. Cash or checks accepted. Please make checks payable to Nick White.

March Membership Meeting is the DEADLINE!!! No reservations or monies will be accepted after this date!

TENTATIVE APRIL 16 ITINERARY

- 6:45 A.M. Departure time. Sharp!!
- 10:45 A.M. Arrival in Chattanooga, TN.
- 11:00 A.M. Lunch
- 1:15 P.M. TVRM train ride to East Chattanooga TVRM Shop and in-depth tour.
- 3:00 P.M. Train departure from TVRM Shop back to Grand Junction.
- 4:00 P.M. Arrival at the Chattanooga Choo Choo.
- 5:30 P.M. Leave the Chattanooga Choo Choo.

Thanks to Gary Price and Nick White in coordination with Mike Tilley for organizing what promises to be a terrific trip.

In the News - Region

MOMMA SAID THERE'D BE DAYS LIKE THIS... Mike Tilley passes along a link to a YouTube video of an October 2010 CSX derailment at a switch in Metairie, LA. The derailment begins a little after the 3:30 minute mark on the video, captured by chance by a railfan. The video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03Nq632eV6I> ... On December 12, NS train 23G derailed under the downtown Roanoke pedestrian crossover in the exact location where our October 30th excursion was parked! Photos can be found at http://www.pbbase.com/hdralleiii/23g_derailment [Information provided by Gary Price]

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD announces the purchase of steam locomotive and passenger coaches



--- Photo by Fred Waskiewicz

[GSMR Press Release] The GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD in coordination with Rail Events Inc. has closed on the acquisition and purchase of Steam Locomotive No. 1149 and a Budd RDC-1 railcar and nine passenger coaches from the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad Preservation Society in Unity, Maine. Locomotive No. 1149 is a Swedish locomotive built in 1913 and exported to the United States in 1994. It is a coal burning locomotive with a 4-6-0 wheel

configuration and a 5000 gallon coal tender. The locomotive was rebuilt and re-tubed in 1998 in compliance with FRA standards. The locomotive and passenger coaches have a Swiss coupling system and will operate together as a train set. The RDC is capable of seating up to 84 passengers and is equipped with operator controls on each end. It has two 275hp diesel engines, and #6 air brakes with D-22 brake valves. The RDC may be coupled to additional passenger coaches and is ideal for photo special excursions operating from Dillsboro to Andrews.

Currently, the locomotive and coaches have been winterized and stored and will begin their journey to Bryson City, NC in late Spring 2011, when rail access opens from winter snow for which Maine is well known. Upon arrival in North Carolina, GSMR Operations Manager Kenny Farley and crew will begin needed minor repairs. Two boiler tubes will be renewed, which means disassembly of the smoke box; and then the throttle re-installed followed by hydrostatic testing required by the FRA. Mr. Farley will coordinate the relocation program for the locomotive and train set. He and his crew currently maintain the 4 diesel electric locomotives and passenger equipment operating on the GSMR rail line. There is also an ongoing effort to revive additional steam locomotives owned by the GSMR through a partnership program with a newly formed nonprofit group who will assist in fundraising efforts for the restoration and continued operation [continued on next page]

of Steam Locomotives No. 722 and No. 1702. No. 722 operated on the Murphy Branch line in the early 1950's and No. 1702 operated between Dillsboro and Andrews from 1995 to 2004.

"Having been with the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad for the past twenty-three years, I have seen the operation grow and the passenger rail tourism industry expand with our successful special events. I and my staff at GSMR are exploding with excitement over the many opportunities that restored steam service will provide not only to the railroad but to the region of Western North Carolina," said Kim Albritton, Vice President and General Manager, GSMR. The restoration of the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad Steam Operation has been a vision of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Allen Harper since 2005. His continued commitment to historic preservation of the rail line and steam operations has made this possible.

C&O 614 TO GO ON DISPLAY

Interchange (Baltimore NRHS) reports that CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 4-8-4 No. 614, which many of you will remember as an excursion engine in the 1980s and 1990s, will leave storage to go on display at two museums. Its first stop is the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke during the winter and spring of 2011. Iron Horse Enterprises, current owner, is loaning the engine and is preparing it for the move, which will be dead in tow behind NS diesel power. While in Roanoke, the engine will be displayed with NORFOLK & WESTERN 4-8-4 No. 611 in an exhibit, sponsored by NORFOLK SOUTHERN, called "Thoroughbreds: N&W 611 and C&O 614, the pinnacle of steam locomotive technology." This exhibit will cover their history and technology, along with their place in our heritage and culture, and their role in the last days of steam. The exhibit will include historical panels, scale models, rare collectibles, and other materials. After a four-month stay, the engine will move to the C&O Railway Heritage Center in Clifton Forge, VA. The 1948 Lima built engine was the last commercially-built passenger steam locomotive in the United States.

In the News - Local

CSX TRANSPORTATION will start testing pusher service from Russell, KY to Erwin, TN. Plans this spring are for CSX to start running two pushers on the rear of certain coal trains on the Kingsport Subdivision. At this point, big questions arise over what will happen when the train goes through the 2-mile-long Sandy Ridge Tunnel at MP 32.

CSX: Erwin Yard has added more signal lights. Recently, shove lights were added to the following tracks: Service 3, 2, 1; main line; and Yard 1 and 2. Instead of the conductor having to protect his shove while riding the back of the train, he can now watch the signal which will turn yellow and then red when he has past certain points. If you drive into Erwin at night the yard looks like a Christmas tree with all the switch lights and shove lights shining.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN recently came through Johnson City, Jonesborough and Greeneville re-tieing and laying new welded rail. The Greeneville switcher, which has been going on duty in Greeneville at 7am daily and bringing cars to Johnson City, Jonesborough and Piney Flats, has been divided into two jobs since the economy has been turning around. The morning train still goes on duty at 7am at Greeneville, works the town of Greeneville, and goes west to Mosheim. The 2nd Greeneville Switcher goes on duty at 5pm and works Greeneville to Piney Flats. The new schedule corrects the problem that the 7am Greeneville Switcher would run out of time every time it went to Piney Flats.

Saving the depot: Jonesborough and Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society hopes to preserve historic Chuckey train station

[Press release from *Johnson City Press*]

The town of Jonesborough and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society are hoping to lend a helping hand in rescuing an important part of Chuckey history.



The Chuckey train depot, built by SOUTHERN RAILWAY in 1906, sits on the corner of Charles Johnson Road and Highway 351 in the unincorporated Greene County town. Founded in the early 1800s, Chuckey was originally

known as Fullens Station, named after its founder James Fullen. According to several accounts of Chuckey history, the town grew and prospered due to the arrival of the railroad. The depot is now privately owned by a local family but it is situated on land owned by NORFOLK SOUTHERN, which recently notified the depot's owners of its plans to demolish the historic structure. The depot is no longer in use but was added to the National Registry of Historic Places in 1979 for its historic architectural significance.

Town officials were approached by former alderman Jimmy Rhein as an intermediary for the family and railroad company, who asked if the town could assist in saving the old depot. "I think our preservation background puts us in the position to do something with it," Mayor Kelly Wolfe said.

At the December Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting, the board agreed to look for a cost-effective way of dismantling the depot. Browning has requested the services of the Carter County work crew. While they seem to be interested, Wolfe said they are still making sure it is a project they can take on.

According to Browning, the town hopes to dismantle the building and then store it until it can be reassembled in a different location. Although it is an old structure that needs much repair, it is really a neat looking building, relatively small and deserves to be saved if we can," Browning said earlier this month in a memo to the board. [continued on next page]

Browning said it could be used as Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society Museum. The Watauga Valley had been in discussion in establishing a railroad museum in Jonesborough for several years.

Though the town is more than willing to help save the building, Wolfe said did not solicit the family to acquire the building. The town, he said, was more of a last resort preservation effort. "If a better option presented itself in Chuckey, we would be supportive of that as well," Wolfe said.

While the depot is an important part of Chuckey's history, Wolfe said the town also recognizes its significance as a part of railroad history. The number of old depots is dwindling across the country. Though the railroad is still prominent in Jonesborough, the town's depot was razed in the 1970s.

"Jonesborough is a railroad community," Wolfe said. "We've got a strong history of having several prominent folks bring the railroad through Jonesborough. Railroad is in our blood. This is a way for us to honor that history, hopefully by preserving this depot."



Photo Section



Mike Tilley collection

Mike Tilley provided this beautiful shot of SOUTHERN's *Tennessean* at Bristol, Virginia in 1951. At point is highly-polished Alco-built DL-109 No. 6401. The Bristol Station's roof can be seen in the left background.

Mike also offers this Builder's Photo of one of the new (in 1973) CLINCHFIELD DF 50 box cars.



Mike Tilley collection

DO YOU HAVE PHOTOS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

If you have photos of local railroad interest you'd like to share with the Chapter through the pages of WHISTLE STOP, please email a digital copy to WHISTLE STOP EDITOR at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. Please do not send original photographs or copies.

Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society
P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432
wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the Chapter members, officers or directors. Items of interest are welcome and will be credited to the author; however, because of space constraints, all submissions are subject to editing. Permission to reprint Whistle Stop articles with the exception of photographs is granted if proper credit is given. Reuse of photographs must receive permission by this Chapter or the photographer.

Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



**Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL