

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Photographer Tony King did a beautiful job of hiding the diesel helpers in this head-on shot of ex-SOU #630 powering the March 9th 21st Century Steam Excursion train. The location is just south of Wytheville, VA as the train heads back to Bristol on a beautiful late-winter afternoon. Our "Powhatan Arrow" coach stands out proudly in the consist.

For more photos of the two-day excursions, check out the Photo Section on pp. 8-9.

March 25th General Membership Meeting

This month's General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will be held at 6:30 pm on March 25th, 2013 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program will be presented by Nick White on the 21st Century Steam Trips and other WVRHS&M activities. This will be a wonderful opportunity to relive these wonderful excursions (or catch up in case you missed them.) Bring a friend and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewell

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: JoAn and Coy Edwards, Jane DeVoe, and Sharon Ritchie Slagle (George and Nancy Ritchie's daughter).

As always, please let us know of members, families, or friends to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. Call the office phone at 423-753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Thanks for helping us keep in touch.

DUES RENEWAL NOTICES

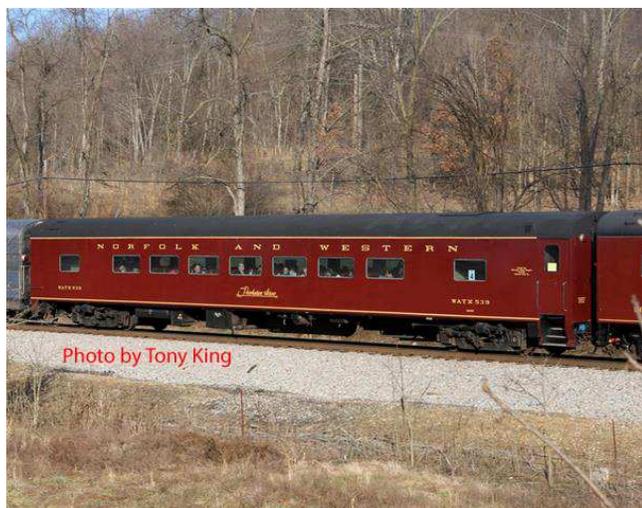
The second dues notices have been mailed out. If you have not paid your dues, please get them paid up ASAP as your membership in the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum expired 12/31/2012. UNLESS DUES ARE PAID, ALL DELINQUENCIES WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE MEMBERSHIP LIST ON MARCH 31st.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

GENERAL. The weather has not kind to the mechanical crew again this month.

CLINCHFIELD COACH. We are in the process of changing the name and owner back to the original names on the letter board: St. Augustine and Florida East Coast. Watauga Valley has been removed and material for the letter boards extensions and car name replacements have been received.



Winterization of the water system has been completed. A strange dust appearing on the floor and heat shrouds lately has been identified - powder from the foam rubber from the seat cushions. WE NEED ANOTHER PROJECT!

Both coaches [CLINCHFIELD and POWHATAN ARROW] were sent to TVRM in early March for the NORFOLK SOUTHERN 21st Century Steam Program. [Bob] got to ride on the train on the March 9 trip and our cars performed as expected.

CRESCENT HARBOR SLEEPER/LOUNGE and MOULTRIE DINING CAR. Both cars have provided us with a reasonable place to work in bad weather.

We have an extensive punch list that will last for some time on each car.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT SPRING STREET COACH YARD. The Mechanical Crew needs volunteers at the Spring Street Coach Yard in Jonesborough on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please show up or phone the Crew at 423-753-5797 to let them know you're coming.

Spring Rail Excursions

The North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum have partnered to sponsor two great rail excursions this Spring. Trains will travel to Washington, D.C. and Charleston, S.C. for 3 day / 2 night trips that will be unforgettable!

April 26-28, 2013

Following two sell-out trips to our nation's capital last year, we had to offer this trip again in 2013! This time, we have added an additional day of sightseeing and more options for passengers.

Tickets will sell fast, so act now!

The Capital City Special

Trip Overview

The "Capital City Special" is a 3-day/2-night scenic excursion from the Piedmont of North Carolina to Washington, DC aboard vintage rail cars, the Clinchfield and Powhatan Arrow. Following a picturesque journey by rail, our travelers will arrive in Alexandria, VA, just outside of the nation's capital.

Following a short stop at the hotel, motorcoaches will provide transportation into historic Old Town Alexandria for dinner. Passengers will then enjoy an exciting evening of sightseeing – exploring some of our country's most breathtaking monuments by moonlight!

Saturday morning begins with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to our country's fallen heroes and witness the changing of the Guard. Our passengers will then travel to the heart of DC, where you will have most of the afternoon on your own to explore the 10 Smithsonian Museums along the National Mall, as well as the Newseum, National Gallery of Art or the National Archives & Records Administration. Dinner will be on your own in old Town Alexandria, followed by a relaxing evening cruise on the Potomac River.

On Sunday morning, passengers will stroll through Old Town Alexandria, once home to George Washington and Robert E. Lee. Tour guides will provide entertaining stories as they share the town's rich history. Passengers will depart from the Alexandria Amtrak Station later in the morning for the return trip home.

Tickets include the round trip ride to Alexandria, VA, motorcoach transportation, hotel accommodations, tours of monuments, Arlington Cemetery, and Old Town Alexandria, as well as Potomac River cruise.

Most of the museums on the National Mall are free; however, museum admission (if applicable) is not included in ticket purchase. No meals are included; however, optional box lunches can be purchased in advance for Friday or Sunday.

Tickets

All Tickets Are Deluxe Coach Class, Aboard the *Clinchfield* or the *Powhatan Arrow*

Amenities include comfort seating. Access to the Amtrak cafe car, optional box lunch available for an additional charge. All tickets include the round trip train ride to Alexandria, Va., motorcoach tours and transportation to and from the hotel.

General Public

\$550/person Single Occupancy \$425/person Double Occupancy

Special rates for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society

\$525/person Single Occupancy \$400/person Double Occupancy

Powhatan Arrow



Clinchfield



No refunds except in case of medical emergency (physician's note required).
All refunds subject to a \$50 processing fee per ticket will be limited to 10 days following the date of the trip.
We reserve the right to cancel trips if the minimum capacity requirements are not met.

TICKETS ARE ON SALE BY PHONE ONLY: Please call 704-636-2889 ext. 237.

May 17-19, 2013

Charleston is brimming with history, culture and charm. Join us for a 3-day weekend getaway to enjoy a sampling of what the Lowcountry has to offer.

The Lowcountry Limited Trip Overview

Consisting of both vintage parlor and passenger cars as well as modern Amfleet cars, a specially chartered train leaves the N.C. Transportation Museum on Friday morning for a scenic ride through the Piedmont of both North and South Carolina before heading to the coast. Upon arrival at the Norfolk Southern railyard in North Charleston, motorcoaches will provide transportation to the hotels before heading into Downtown Charleston for dinner on their own at one of Charleston's remarkable restaurants.

On Saturday, passengers can embark on one of two different sightseeing tours for an additional fee or opt to explore historic Downtown Charleston on your own. Tour options include:

- A. Charleston Sampler – Tour of Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, Fort Sumter and USS Yorktown; includes a box lunch. Cost is \$65/person.
- B. Land & Sea Tour – 2-hour guided stroll through the heart of Downtown Charleston and a 90-minute guided harbor cruise; Time on your own in the afternoon; Lunch not included. Cost is \$40/person.
- C. On Your Own – Spend the day exploring beautiful downtown Charleston. Complimentary transportation is provided from the hotel in the morning to the Custom's House/Old Town Market. Charleston also has a free trolley service that runs within the downtown area.

Saturday evening, motorcoaches will provide continuous service from the hotels to Downtown Charleston from 6pm until 10pm, so passengers can once again enjoy a fun evening and dinner on their own.

Passengers will board the train Sunday morning for an enjoyable train ride back to North Carolina.

Tickets include the round trip ride to Charleston, SC, motorcoach transportation, hotel accommodations and hot continental breakfast meals on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Tour options and box lunches must be purchased in advance.

Ticket Options and Amenities

Premium First Class	Deluxe Coach
<p>Amenities include:</p> <p>Lounge seating aboard restored, vintage rail cars. Meals are provided in a vintage dining car. Friday - Breakfast and lunch (included with ticket purchase). Sunday - Lunch (included with your ticket purchase). Snacks and drinks (water, coffee, soft drinks) provided.</p> <p>General Public: \$775/person Single Occupancy \$675/person Double Occupancy</p> <p>Special Rates: <i>Only for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society:</i> \$750/person Single Occupancy \$650/person Double Occupancy</p>	<p>Amenities include:</p> <p>Comfortable, adjustable seating aboard vintage passenger cars and modern Amfleet cars. Optional box lunch - must be ordered prior to the trip at additional cost. Snacks and drinks (water, coffee, soft drinks) provided.</p> <p>General Public: \$675/person Single Occupancy \$575/person Double Occupancy</p> <p>Special Rates: <i>Only for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society:</i> \$650/person Single Occupancy \$550/person Double Occupancy</p>

No refunds except in case of medical emergency (physician's note required).
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In the News



611 TO STEAM AGAIN? By now everyone should be aware that there is a study underway to determine the feasibility of returning N&W 611 to excursion service. In case you missed the story, go to <http://www.fireup611.org/main/index.php>. A sweet 5-minute video has been produced and is available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDKru1iE80s>. [WARNING: If you're not into Rock & Roll you might not care for the background music featuring Bon Jovi, but that's why your device has a mute option.]



NS TO DISCONTINUE CERTAIN RAILCAR SORTING OPERATIONS IN ROANOKE
NORFOLK SOUTHERN announced on February 25th that it will cease regional railcar classification operations at its Roanoke Terminal Hump Yard. This will mean the elimination of about 140 positions. The Terminal will continue to provide service to local customers, and to be a hub for through train operations.

The Roanoke Hump operation has seen steady decline in the volume of general merchandise cars handled by about 30 percent since 2006. At the same time, system-wide improvements in the railroad's operations have freed up network capacity such that classifications operations now performed at Roanoke are no longer necessary. "The employees who work at Roanoke are dedicated and efficient," said Terry Evans, Vice President, Transportation. "But the geographical location and layout of the hump yard make it not only expensive but redundant within our network

Most of the affected positions are Carmen, who inspect and repair railcars, and train crews, who conduct switching operations in the yard. Some track maintenance positions are affected. System wide, NORFOLK SOUTHERN anticipates hiring between 850 and 1,150 employees in 2013 to keep up with attrition. These positions will first be offered to employees affected by the Roanoke change and employees furloughed at other locations



GULF & OHIO RAILWAYS ACQUIRES 4-4-0 FROM STONE MOUNTAIN SCENIC
[Original source: trains.com] GULF & OHIO RAILWAYS has successfully acquired and moved STONE MOUNTAIN SCENIC RAILROAD 4-4-0 No. 60 from Stone Mountain, GA to Knoxville. The railroad will evaluate the locomotive for possible restoration and operation on the railroad's "Three Rivers Rambler" tourist train, which operates out of Knoxville. The railroad had previously restored ex-SOUTHERN RAILWAY 2-8-0 No. 154, built in 1890, for passenger service.

Baldwin built No. 60 in 1922 for Texas' SAN ANTONIO & ARANSAS PASS RAILWAY. In the 1930s, it became TEXAS & NEW ORLEANS RAILROAD No. 220, and was renumbered 260 in 1950. In 1954 Paulsen Spence acquired it for his LOUISIANA EASTERN RAILROAD, which was to be powered by steam locomotives he had collected over the years. Upon his death most of his collection was scrapped, but No. 60 escaped. It was purchased in 1962 by the STONE MOUNTAIN SCENIC RAILROAD, which named it *Texas II* for tourist service at Georgia's Stone Mountain State Park. The engine last operated in 1983, although it continued to occasionally "pull" Trains, while pushed by a diesel, until 2002.

G&O acquired the engine from STONE MOUNTAIN SCENIC, which still operates using a pair of ex-SOUTHERN RAILWAY FP7s and an ex-CHESAPEAKE & OHIO GP7.

21st Century Steam Excursions in Review

By Gary Price

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

For those of us that have been Watauga Valley members for an extended period of time, it came as no surprise that our dates for the 21st Century Steam Excursion would fall on Daylight Savings Time weekend. During the 1990s it always seemed that our excursion with NORFOLK SOUTHERN always managed to be scheduled on the spring and Fall DST day, thus adding something else that we had to worry about, especially in the spring, because if you forgot to “spring” your clocks forward, then you would miss the train all together. Even when we started our partnership with the NCTM for Amtrak excursions, they seemed to be scheduled on the weekend that we would have to “fall” our clocks back one hour. This was welcome to us simply because it meant an extra hour to rest up after an extremely tiresome Saturday on the train, plus, if we forgot to set our clock back, we simply arrived one hour prior to everyone else that followed orders.

However, the March 9-10, 2013 dates for the 21st Century Steam Special, sponsored by NORFOLK SOUTHERN, Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum were indeed magical trips. Even though we set our clocks ahead one hour, in reality it felt like we turned the calendar back twenty years.

The weather was absolutely perfect for two sold-out trips, and thirty five WVRHS&M members donned their official 21st Century Steam hat, safety reflective vest and name badge over the two days. They also received a proper safety briefing from Mr. Bill Schafer, who is the lead man on the excursions for TVRM.

Way down in Bristol Yard, the first sight and sounds of the Southern 630 belching smoke in the air, and releasing the steam from the pistons sent chills throughout every member and passenger waiting at the restored Bristol Union Depot. Little children cupped their hands over ears as the 630 would let out a blast from her magnificent whistle. “Ooohs and Aaahs” were spoken by the crowd as the train backed out of the yard, by the signal at Control Point “Ford”, and then proceeded forward to the main track to be in position to load passengers. I am glad they did it this way both days, because it gave the passengers the opportunity to have their very own photo run-by before boarding the train.

AND THE CHASE WAS ON

For those who fondly remember the hey days of NS steam, the one thing passengers got a kick out of was the seemingly endless parade of car and railfans as they raced down the road at breakneck speed just to try to secure that coveted prize winning photo location. In every town that we passed people turned out in throngs just to catch a glimpse of Americana as the 109 year old steam locomotive proudly high stepped her way from town to town. People ran out of their homes in their pajamas when they heard the whistle heralding our presence. Cows and horses scattered in the field as passengers pointed and made jokes about fast food. Every bridge we passed under had a photo line in



At Bull's Gap. Photo by Emily Price.

[continued on next page] position to grab a great shot as we passed under them. I spotted several WVRHS&M members beside the tracks taking photos and cheering us on. The community of Radford, VA and Bulls Gap, TN rolled out the red carpet for our passengers. The City of Radford even presented our President Mike Tilley with the key to the city.

VIP

On board the trips were a few people that I consider VIPs. Bob Saxan is NORFOLK SOUTHERN General Foreman Steam, whose official position is to make sure the trains get to the locations safely and works with all local railroad officials on storage and movements of train. Mr. Saxan was the engineer on the 611 and 1218 during the steam program, and he was the engineer on most of our steam trips out of Bristol in the late 80s and early 90s. Ms. Cheri George was on board handing out flyers and discussing the future of the 611. A lot of people didn't recognize her, but she was the only certified fire "person" on the 611 and 1218. She is now on the FIREUP611 committee dedicated to the restoration and operation of the 611 for future excursions. I was able to set down and share some old war stories with her, and she is very optimistic that we will see the 611 under steam again. Finally, as I was doing a walk through car #1 on Saturday, I looked across all the smiling faces and in the very last seat was a familiar face that I have not seen for a while, Mr. Jim Wrinn, editor of Trains magazine. Then imagine my surprise when he showed up in the same seat for Sunday's trip as well. We had a lot of passengers who bought tickets for both days and rode in the same car both days; this made things even more fun.



WVRHS&M member Ian Ring was rewarded with a cab tour after the Bull's Gap excursion.

All in all, we had two successful, sold-out trips (I understand there were 2500 on the waiting list). The Watauga Valley RHS&M volunteers were praised for their professionalism. The passengers was treated to a rare experience, and we are already picking up new members, but most importantly, coal smoke once again visited the Tri-Cities, and our mission as an organization was successful.

I also want to take a minute to thank, Ben, Amy, Jonah, Isaiah, and Ethan Blevins for providing crowd control at Abingdon, and Bob Klempler for crowd control at Johnson City.

[ED. NOTE: Want some chills to run down your spine? Listen to 630's whistle on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/c38t6yc>.]

Thank you, Excursion Workers!

The WVRHS&M Board of Directors would like to thank all 35 members who volunteered as Car Host on the March 9 & 10 trips to Radford, VA and Bulls Gap, TN. As those who served agree, these two trips were some of the most successful ones in which we've participated in many years.

We had beautiful weather along with two excellent destinations. NORFOLK SOUTHERN and Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum were both complementary of our services. We were proud to have both of our cars in the consist.


Photo Section


Many members responded to our request for 21st Century Steam Excursion photos. Here are but a few samples. Thanks to all of you for the contributions and apologies in advance if there wasn't space for your photos. [But there's plenty of space on our Facebook page!]



A nostalgic sight along State Street in Bristol.
[Tony King]



Arriving in Abingdon on March 9th.
[Jonah Blevins]



Just west of the control point of Radford on the east end of the Bristol Line. The CPLs stand proud over the excursion train, as these signals date back well into the N&W steam era. [Ben Blevins]



March 11th move to Roanoke. [Don Finley]



Cruising through Groseclose, VA on March 11th.
[Nick White]



Although taken the following week in Roanoke, we couldn't resist adding this remarkable shot by Mike Tilley.



A few of the tired yet happy volunteers after a successful Saturday trip to Radford. Left aisle to rear: Howard Orfield, Scott Wise, Dan Freeman, Randy Moore, Penny May. Right aisle to rear: Bob Douglas, Ray Tolley, Becky Wise, Mike Tilley, Gary Price. [Nick White photo]

RAILROAD APPLICATIONS FOR USE ON YOUR COMPUTER OR SMARTPHONE

[From Greensboro NRHS "Roundhouse".] One of the most often used apps is the NS Heritage Unit Locator, which shows the location of the variously painted units. UNION PACIFIC has an app to follow their two steam locomotives during their Spring through Fall excursion programs.

There are a number of scanner sites where rail traffic can be heard. Be sure to read the reviews of them before downloading, as some are better than others. Wunder Radio has gotten some strong recommendations as does 5-0 Radio. Scanner Radio is very good also.

Progressive Railroading's app has probably the best railroad news coverage anywhere, including shipping statistics and financial information, and both their electronic and print magazines are free, as is their app.

These apps can be found in virtual stores such as Google Play and the Apple online stores. Pricing varies, with most being free. The scanner apps range in price from \$1.99 to \$6.99. Locate them by going to the store and doing a term search. Railroad company websites also have applications.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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