

Whistle Stop



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

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Although Halloween is over, ghostly images, such as that above, keep appearing from the former CRR / CSX rail yard in Erwin, TN. There's no word yet on what is to become of the property.

According to a CSX spokesperson, "At this time, we don't expect to come back or to return operations to Erwin. We are continuing to look at options on the property." [Mike Tilley photo]

November 23rd General Membership Meeting

The next WVRHS&M General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, November 23rd, starting at 6:30 p.m., and located at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will be presented by Bob and Norma Hand on the "Glacier Express", the rail system which runs from St. Moritz to Zermatt, Switzerland at the foot of the Matterhorn Mountain, a trip Bob and Norma took this past summer. It features the Swiss electric rail system, showing how it was built beginning in 1926 and showcasing the views of beautiful valleys, glaciers, cities and mountains on this 8 hour trip that takes you over 291 bridges and through 91 tunnels. This is a program you do not want to miss. We will also be reviewing our highly successful Autumn Train Excursions. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great program.

2016 OFFICER and BoD ELECTION

The 2016 WVRHS&M election ballots were mailed out in early November. All Ballots must be received by 12:01 am December 10, 2015. A ballot box will be available at the November meeting or you can mail to Nominating Committee, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. The results of the election will be announced at the December 12, 2015 Christmas Gathering.

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M MEMBERSHIP DUES

2016 dues notices were mailed out and sent electronically via e-mail recently. Please get your dues and check back into the Membership Chairman Edna Carter ASAP at Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. You can join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum for \$20.00 individual, adding family members at \$5.00 each. For questions e-mail wataugavalley@gmail.com.

2015 AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSION A BIG SUCCESS

Everyone will agree that of the nine years of operating the Autumn Train Excursions out of Spencer, 2015 was the best yet. All the comments from the passengers and volunteers were very positive. If you missed these great trips, please start planning for 2016. The following e-mail was sent out to all the WVRHS&M volunteers that worked the train. To all of our volunteers,

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! T H A N K Y O U !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

MIKE TILLEY, PRESIDENT, WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dear WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M VOLUNTEERS:

Thanks to everyone for two great trips this past weekend! Everyone did a fantastic job and our passengers appreciated all your assistance and help. Both trips ran very well, everyone really seemed to enjoy both days.

Great customer service is key in our business and thanks to each of you for showing our passengers special attention.

Hope everyone gets some rest and get ready to do it again next year!!

Thanks again!

Kelly Alexander, Chief Operating Officer
North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation

No December Meeting

Please note that there will not be a General Membership Meeting in December due to the holidays. We will, however, enjoy each other's fellowship at the December 12th Christmas Meal.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

ROLLING STOCK.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): Will be in Spencer, NC for the Polar Express Excursion trains out of the NCTM.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): Will be in Spencer, NC for the Polar Express Excursion trains out of the NCTM

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): Will be in Spencer, NC for the Polar Express Excursion trains out of the NCTM.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): Is in winter storage at the WVRHS&M Coach Yard in Jonesborough. WVRHS&M will be making some mechanical upgrades during the winter months.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATV 100): The Watauga Valley mechanical team has started work on preparing Car 100 for the Santa Train Event. Also, Car 100 will be going to the North Carolina Transportation Museum for display in the round house over the winter months.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE SANTA TRAIN CAR

WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough are again sponsoring the “Santa Train Car” at the Spring St. Coach Yard in Jonesborough. Everyone is welcome to come out and bring their children to meet Santa Claus, who will be greeting guests and talking with children from the rear platform of the museum’s historic ex-CLINCHFIELD business car 100. This year’s event will be held from 4 pm to 7 pm on Friday, December 11th and 3 pm to 5 pm on December 12th. Visitors will also have an opportunity to tour car 100, where refreshments will be served.

The event follows Jonesborough’s “At Home with Santa” (11 am to 3 pm) and precedes the “Annual Jonesborough Christmas Parade” that begins at 6 pm. In a press release, WVRHS&M President Mike Tilley invited all to attend, stating “Santa wants to see his friends again from this beautiful railroad car. The car has not been open to the public in the Jonesborough area for nearly 30 years. Santa will ride the car from the North Pole to Jonesborough to greet everyone, giving his reindeers a vacation.”

Many in our area are likely familiar with the Santa Train Car (car 100), which was used for many years on the Clinchfield Railroad’s “Santa Train” from which Santa threw candy off its platform as the train traveled from Elkhorn City, KY to Kingsport, TN.

Volunteers are needed to help host the event, assisting visitors boarding and touring car 100. Please volunteer by signing the sheet at the November 23rd General Membership Meeting, by emailing wataugavalley@gmail.com or calling (423) 753-5797. This will be some good publicity for the WVRHS&M as we are expecting good attendance.

In the News



Chuckey Museum Restoration Update

Restoration of the Chuckey Depot Museum in Jonesborough slowed down in October and November due to all workers being pulled off the project and assigned to work on the new Jonesborough Senior Center. Plans at this time are to restart work in mid-December. The proposed grand opening date is scheduled for June 1st, 2016. Watauga Valley RHS&M will need volunteers to serve as museum hosts; volunteer sign up sheets will be available in the near future. Also, if you have anything to display in the museum, please contact President Mike Tilley. There has been such an outpouring of donations to the museum that accepting items will be limited in the near future.



CSX Takes a Portion of Old CLINCHFIELD Out of Service

According to multiple sources, CSX plans to take a portion of the old CLINCHFIELD from MP 23 to MP 42 (McClure to St. Paul, VA) out of service. This has spawned a tidal wave of rumor and speculation on social media as to what this means to traffic (and whether or not it will have an impact on the "Santa Train"). As Whistle Stop is committed to publishing what is only known as fact, preferably cited in press releases (nothing on this topic has been found to date), further discussion of this closure will be left to social media for the time being.



CANADIAN PACIFIC / NORFOLK SOUTHERN MERGER?

The *New York Times* reports that CANADIAN PACIFIC, whose earlier buyout overtures were spurned by CSX, has now held preliminary discussions with NORFOLK SOUTHERN regarding acquisition. However, it has been cautioned that the two railroads ultimately may not reach a deal. In a released statement, CP said that it had no "material news" to report at the moment, and declined to comment further. A spokesman for NS declined to comment. If a deal were to be reached, it would be the latest reshaping of the North American rail industry, which has rapidly consolidated since the government deregulated the sector in the early 1980s. That has led to a severe winnowing in the number of Class I railroads, from 56 in 1975 to seven in 2015. [ED. NOTE: Ref: AAR. Can you name them?]



CSX Honors CHESAPEAKE and OHIO RAILWAY



[Chase Gunnoe - Trains News Wire] CSX Transportation has unveiled its latest predecessor railroad emblem on a recent repaint at its Waycross, GA Locomotive Shops. CSX GE CW40-8 #7376 emerged from Waycross displaying a "Chesapeake & Ohio for Progress" decal. The navy blue and yellow logo was applied to both the locomotive's engineer's and conductor's side nose hood. #7376 is the third of at least 10 predecessor decals to be applied by the railroad's Waycross

facility. CSX #256 was the first locomotive released and features a SEABOARD COAST LINE decal. CSX #323 was released with a LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE logo.

For Your Viewing Pleasure

Just in time for buying a Christmas present for that favorite railfan in your life (who might be yourself!), the C&O Historical Society is offering the following DVDs.

611Forever DVD

In this action-packed DVD, follow the indomitable #611 pulling famed named trains, "The Pocahontas" and "Powhatan Arrow," in the 1950s, as well as a tragic wreck that nearly became her undoing. Then, in the 1980s, stunning aerial photography hovers above cliffs and snakes through hidden hollers deep in the mountains, tracking #611 through West Virginia and Ohio. The streamlined bullet nose 'J' Class 4-8-4 engine steps out on one of her rare trips across the summits of the Norfolk and Western main line between Roanoke and Portsmouth. Finally, in 2015, witness #611 firing back to life once more. . More info: go to chessishop.com and search for AV-15-199.

Norfolk & Western 611 - Reborn Vol. 1 Return to Roanoke & Manassas DVD

Filmed entirely in HD, this program features #611 on the mainline with no diesel assistance. You'll see the legendary J-class working hard in the mountains of Virginia, just as the N&W intended when she rolled out of the Roanoke shops in 1950. This program has minimal narration (with the option to turn it on or off) and no distracting music. . More info: go to chessishop.com and search for AV-15-196.

Norfolk & Western 611 - Reborn Volume 2: Blue Ridge & Christiansburg DVD

Filmed entirely in HD, this program features incredible stack talk as #611 demonstrates why she's the world's most powerful 4-8-4. With her thunderous bark and deep mournful whistle, #611 provides a brief glimpse of what the golden age of steam was like on the Norfolk & Western. This program has minimal narration (with the option to turn it on or off) and no distracting music. . More info: go to chessishop.com and search for AV-15-197.

ELECTRONIC VERSION OF NEWSLETTER

We are still asking members receiving paper copies to switch over to the electronic version of the Whistle Stop. The electronic version is in living color and the quality is so much better than the printed copy. It also has active links to referenced web sites. Please try it! Call the office (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com and give us your e-mail address so you can start receiving this improved version.



Happy Thanksgiving!!!

Upcoming Events



NOVEMBER 21: 73rd Annual CSX “Santa Train” over ex-CLINCHFIELD from Shelby, KY to Kingsport, TN. “Deadhead” from Kingsport to Erwin. See schedule below.



NOVEMBER 21, 27-29, DECEMBER 4-6, 11-13, 16-22: “The Polar Express” train ride, NCTM, Spencer, NC. See <http://tinyurl.com/nek1b5b>



DECEMBER 5-6: TCA Southeastern Division model train show. Raleigh, NC. See <http://www.se-tca.org/index.htm>



DECEMBER 11-12: WVRHS&M “Santa Train Car”, Spring Street Coach Yard, Jonesborough, TN.



DECEMBER 12: WVRHS&M Christmas Meal, JONESBOROUGH MCKINNEY CENTER, 103 Franklin Ave., Jonesborough, TN.

Schedule: “Santa Train”	Saturday, November 21, 2015
DP: Shelby, KY	0630
AR: Marrowbone, KY	0645
DP: Marrowbone, KY	0700
AR: Elkhorn City, KY	0725
DP: Elkhorn City, KY	0745
AR: Toms Bottom, VA	0805
DP: Toms Bottom, VA	0815
AR: Haysi, VA	0827
DP: Haysi, VA	0842
AR: Clinchco, VA	0900
DP: Clinchco, VA	0915
AR: Fremont, VA	0928
DP: Fremont, VA	0953
AR: Dante, VA	1028
DP: Dante, VA	1048
AR: St. Paul, VA	1108
DP: St. Paul, VA	1128
AR: Dungannon, VA	1213
DP: Dungannon, VA	1233
AR: Ft. Blackmore, VA	1253
DP: Ft. Blackmore, VA	1308
AR: Kermit, VA	1348
DP: Kermit, VA	1418
AR: Waycross, TN	1430
DP: Waycross, TN	1445
AR: Kingsport, TN	1508
DP: Kingsport, TN	1730
AR: Erwin, TN	1900

Photo Gallery

With so much work to do before and during the excursions, taking a few minutes off just to take a few photographs is a luxury. Nonetheless, Mike Tilley and Bobby Hand managed to do just that, capturing a few, brief moments of two exciting and beautiful rail trips.



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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING & MEAL



SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 12th, 2015

It's time once again for the WVRHS&M annual Christmas Meal, and this year we plan to gather at the McKinney Center, 103 Franklin Ave., Jonesborough, TN. WVRHS&M will provide meats, drinks, deserts and rolls. Members are asked to bring a vegetable and salad, 2 vegetables or 2 salads. Please bring enough food for yourself, for your guest(s), and for several others by 11:30 a.m. as the serving line will open at 12 noon.

To make reservations, please mail the form below to Watauga Valley RHS&M Annual Meal, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. You can also call in your reservation to our office phone at (423) 753-5797, hand in your form at the November 23rd General Membership meeting or email

wataugavalley@gmail.com.

There will be good food and good fellowship! Please have your reservations in by Saturday, December 5th, 2015.

YOU'LL see US at the *Christmas Gathering!*

Name _____ Number Attending _____

Address _____ City _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

We will bring 2 - Vegetables ____ 2 - Salads ____ Vegetable and Salad ____