

# Whistle Stop



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

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Photographer Mike Pierry, Jr. caught ex-N&W 611 roaring through Conover, NC at track speed, on point during its April 10<sup>th</sup> excursion to Asheville.

## *April 25<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting*

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership Meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the Johnson City Public Library 101 West Millard St. Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will showcase the NORFOLK SOUTHERN'S Steam Program. Mark your calendar so you will not miss this meeting. Come out bring a friend and enjoy a great night of railroading with your friends.

## *Member Notes*

### *By Nancy Jewel*

Spring is here with many activities and meetings for members and friends to enjoy. Let us hope for good weather for excursions and other events. Please keep a number of folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Bob Douglas, George Ritchie, Gary Price, Bob Yaple, Ray Tolley, George and Margaret Holley.

As always, let us know of any members, friends, or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is (423) 753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918. Your help is needed and appreciated.

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### ***COPPERHILL TRIP WENT OFF WITH A BANG***

Sold out Train! Great bunch of passengers and beautiful weather combined to make the Hiwassee Gorge Excursion a great trip. April 2 was an excellent day to ride a train down by the river and through the mountains. Everyone had a great time and viewed some Beautiful spring scenery through the mountains of East Tennessee. Thanks to all the Watauga Valley volunteers who provided excellent service.

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### ***FUTURE RAIL EXCURSIONS***

#### **WASHINGTON, DC**

Watauga Valley RHS&M and the North Carolina Transportation Museum will operate an excursion to Washington DC on July 7 through July 10. More details about the trip will be announced very soon. If you're interested in purchasing tickets for this trip, please call the North Carolina Transportation Museum at (704) 636-2889. Museum cars to be used on the trip are the St Augustine and Powhatan Arrow.

#### **SUMMER EXCURSION ON THE GSMR**

The Watauga Valley RHS&M announced recently that our Summer Excursion will be on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad in Bryson City, NC on Saturday, August 13, 2016. Tickets will go on sale soon; a sign up sheet for car hosts will be available at the May membership meeting.

#### **FALL AMTRAK EXCURSION**

This year's Fall AMTRAK Excursion, always a very popular event, will be operated on October 29th from Spencer, NC to Charlottesville, VA and on Sunday, October 30th from Spencer to Toccoa, GA. Car Host sign up forms will be available soon.

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

*by Jim Magill*

### **GENERAL**

The weather has been good to the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team and there have been a lot of good working days at the yard over the last several weeks. Looks like spring is knocking on our door and we can finally get some work done. If you would like to help out at the Jonesborough Coach yard on Tuesday between 9am to 5pm or Saturdays 9am to 12 noon, please call the WVRHS&M Office at (423) 753-5797.

### **YARD EXTENSION**

Contracts have been signed with the contractors to start yard extension work on the Spring St. coach yard next month. The new addition to the yard will provide needed space to bring all our cars into the yard and not have to store them in other locations. New electrical service will also be installed during the work. Tracks 1 and 2 will be extended west 45 feet.

### **ROLLING STOCK**

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): Had some air conditioning updates along with some HEP cable replacement. The car is on the 611 excursions through June.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): Had new photos installed in car. All the seats were repaired with new parts installed. The car is on the 611 excursions through June.

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): Was used on the 611 trips out of Spencer to Lynchburg and Asheville on April 9 and 10<sup>th</sup>.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): Had new upholstery installed on some of the lounge seats; wiring repairs in the electrical cabinet; and general overall cleaning in the car. #2351 was used on the 611 trips out of Spencer to Lynchburg and Asheville on April 9 and 10<sup>th</sup>.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATV 100): We are presently looking for trucks that will satisfy AMTRAK certification requirements.

### **STORAGE BUILDING**

The storage building for supplies is being prepared to start operating out of it. Jeanie Walker, supply chairman, and Art Devoe have been transferring supplies out of the white trailer to the new building. David Denny and Jan Edwards have been working the last several weeks in building steps going into the supply building and making shelves.

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## *VISIT WATAUGA VALLEY ON FACEBOOK*

You're invited to visit Watauga Valley's Facebook page, hosted by Gary Price. You get news faster than the monthly newsletter and you'll see great photos for which there just isn't room in the Whistle Stop. To date we have nearly 600 folk who have friended us. Finding us is easy: search for “Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum”.

## *In the News*



### ***JONESBOROUGH DEPOT and MUSEUM***

Progress on the Chuckey Depot / Museum in Jonesborough is going great. Work on the building continues nearly every day and is projected to be completed by late May or early June of this year. Museum displays will not be up and running until later this year; however, the Chuckey Depot / Museum Committee is taking names now to help prepare displays for the museum. If you're interested in helping for a couple of Saturdays or during the week, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 or sign up at the April General Membership Meeting.



### ***ROANOKE TRAIN STATION UPDATE***

With the approval of a plan for a new train station in downtown by the Roanoke City Council, extension of Virginia AMTRAK service from Lynchburg to Roanoke is one step closer. The city will vacate a 985-foot area along Norfolk Avenue adjacent to the railroad and sell it to NORFOLK SOUTHERN for 10 dollars. Once the property is transferred to NORFOLK SOUTHERN, construction of a new boarding platform will commence. This was the last hurdle to be overcome in obtaining state approval for the service extension to Roanoke. The new platform will accommodate a nine-car AMTRAK train. The initiative to bring AMTRAK service to Roanoke began in 2014 and service is expected to begin sometime in 2017. The new service will open up the possibility of trips to Roanoke accompanied by visits to the Virginia Museum of Transportation and the O. Winston Link Museum. [WVLS Channel 10 News]



### ***NS COMMENTS on CP BID WITHDRAWAL***

[NS Press Release] NORFOLK SOUTHERN issued the following statement regarding Canadian Pacific's withdrawal of its unsolicited acquisition proposal and its related shareholder resolution:

NORFOLK SOUTHERN's board and management team are committed to enhancing value for shareholders. Since the company's new management team was appointed, NORFOLK SOUTHERN has been focused on implementing a strategic plan to streamline operations, reduce expenses and maintain superior customer service levels.

The NORFOLK SOUTHERN team has made significant progress and is on track to achieve annual productivity savings of more than \$650 million and an operating ratio below 65 percent by 2020. We are confident the continued execution of our plan will deliver superior value to all of the company's stakeholders by best positioning NORFOLK SOUTHERN to succeed.

We thank our shareholders for their input and support throughout this process and our employees for their hard work and dedication to strengthening NORFOLK SOUTHERN as a critical component of the nation's transportation infrastructure.

Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC and Bank of America Merrill Lynch are acting as financial advisors to NORFOLK SOUTHERN Corporation and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Hunton & Williams LLP and Morrison & Foerster LLP are acting as legal advisors.

 *Locomotive Changes at Cass Scenic Railroad*

[*Trains Magazine Newswire*, compiled by Kim Young] Look for a heavy-haul highway rig to move DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY Climax No. 3 for a road trip some 20 miles south to the shops at the CASS SCENIC RAILROAD at Cass, WV, in April. A return trip will carry CSRR Heisler No. 6 to Durbin.

John Smith, president of the DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY and operator of the CASS SCENIC RAILROAD, told *Trains News Wire* that "the goal is to get No. 3, a two-truck Climax, upgraded to FRA standards." He said the engine needs boiler work to meet the federal requirements. As for the CASS Heisler, shop forces are just completing FRA-mandated 1,472-day work.

"Rather than shut down the Durbin train while No. 3 is out of service, we decided to take No. 6 up there," Smith says. "By next Christmas, we hope to be able to run No. 3 back up there and bring No. 6 back to Cass on the old C&O line." The Greenbrier River overflowed its banks more than 20 years ago and damaged portions of the former CHESAPEAKE & OHIO Greenbrier Branch between Cass and Durbin. The DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY eventually reopened about five miles south from Durbin, Smith says, and in 2015 about two miles of track north from Cass were rebuilt, including filling in one major washout. The first project this year will be lining and surfacing that track.

"We'll work upstream from Cass this summer. There's about nine miles to go including four good-sized washouts, and we'll put in 8,000 ties," Smith says.

 *For Your Viewing Enjoyment ...* The UK's BBC2 network has produced a new series "Great American Railroad Journeys", which follows their "Great British Railway Journeys" and "Great Continental Railway Journeys". Some US PBS stations have offered these series. Check your local station. What's in your basement? If you're like 77 year old Howard Zane you might have a model railroad but in Howard's case he has a million dollar railroad. His model railroad has taken years to build and covers about 3,000 square feet of space. The detail is amazing. Howard is happily married to his third wife, which just goes to show sometimes the 3<sup>rd</sup> time really is a charm. <http://biggeekdad.com/2016/03/million-dollar-railroad/> Chasing 611, from a drone no less ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1hSOSN6Nqc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjGeMLUCuR0>

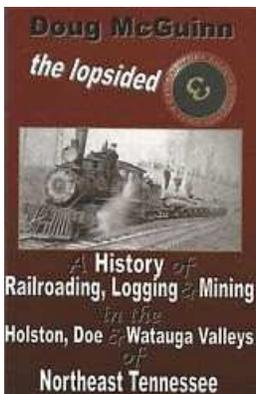
Yes, now do you not only have to worry about a rabid railfan ruining your perfectly composed period shot of a steam locomotive but also a hovering 21<sup>st</sup> century toy. Still, what a great perspective view of this magnificent machine in operation.

## Upcoming Events

	<b>MAY 19-22:</b> N&W Historical Society Convention, Hilton Garden Inn, Pikeville, KY. Info: <a href="http://www.nwhs.org/convention/2016pikeville/">http://www.nwhs.org/convention/2016pikeville/</a>
	<b>JUNE 25:</b> 13th North Carolina Rail Fair, Metrolina Expo Center, Building 1, Charlotte, NC. Info: <a href="http://www.gserr.com/shows.htm">http://www.gserr.com/shows.htm</a>
	<b>JULY 7-10:</b> WVRHS&M and NCTM excursion to Washington, DC.
	<b>JULY 16 &amp; 17:</b> Cass Scenic Railfan Weekend, The Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association will be hosting a new photography venue in conjunction with a DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY RAILROAD event. Info: <a href="http://www.msrlha.org/">http://www.msrlha.org/</a>
	<b>JULY 19-24:</b> NRHS National Convention, Denver, CO. Info: <a href="http://nrhs.com/content/2016-convention">http://nrhs.com/content/2016-convention</a>
	<b>AUGUST 13:</b> WVRHS&M Summer Excursion over the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD.
	<b>OCTOBER 29 &amp; 30:</b> WVRHS&M and NCTM Fall AMTRAK excursions from Spencer, NC to Charlottesville, VA and Toccoa, GA.

## *#611's REMAINING 2016 EXCURSION SCHEDULE*

- April 23-24: "The Roanoker", Greensboro, NC to Roanoke, VA.
- May 7-8: "The Powhatan Arrow", Roanoke, VA to Lynchburg, VA
- May 7-8: "The Pelican", Roanoke, VA to Walton (Radford), VA
- June 4: "The American", Manassas, VA to Front Royal, VA (runs once)
- June 5: "The American", Manassas, VA to Front Royal, VA (runs twice)



### **The Lopsided Three: A History of Railroading, Logging and Mining in the Holston, Doe and Watauga Valleys of Northeast Tennessee**

Although published in 2010, this book is just now coming to your editor's attention. THE LOPSIDED THREE contains the history of railroading, logging, and mining in three northeast Tennessee valleys: the Holston, the Doe, and the Watauga. Available from Amazon.

# Copperhill Trip ...

The collage below captures but a few of the wonderful moments experienced by all on our April 2<sup>nd</sup> Hiwassee River excursion. For more photos, visit our Facebook page. [Brad McCroskey photos]



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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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