

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Here's a scene to help you shake off those winter chills. NORFOLK SOUTHERN ES44AC #8099 "Southern" heritage engine leads auto rack train 275 as it crosses the massive Cumberland River Bridge along its Central Division in Burnside, KY. [NS CORP photo posted to facebook]

January 23rd General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will have our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, January 23rd, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will feature a video of a cab ride out of Erwin, TN on the old Clinchfield – proving why it was one of the most scenic railroads in the United States. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Our sympathy is extended to the family of James Brotherton and to Bob and Norma Hand in the recent death of Bob's sister Kitty Gaskell.

Please keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Suzie Tilley, Bob Yapple, Katie Phelps, Nancy Jewell, Betty Jackson, Carol May, George Ritchie, Richard Baker's mother and Gary Price. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-3226.

Hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and got to spend time with family and friends. I am looking forward to seeing the spring flowers again.

LATE WVRHS&M DUES NOTICE

If you have not paid your dues as of press time, your WVRHS&M membership expired December 31, 2016. Please send in your 2017 dues ASAP to keep receiving your issues of the Whistle Stop, ability to join in our many exciting rail activities, and to prevent our busy membership chairman from having to send you a LATE NOTICE. Dues are \$20.00 for an individual and \$5.00 for each family member. Send completed membership form (see <http://wataugavalleynrhs.org/pdf/membership-application-2017.pdf>) and your check (no cash) for dues to Membership Chairman Edna Carter, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. For questions, e-mail wataugavalley@gmail.com. Please get your dues in today. **NOTE: NRHS & RHA WILL SEND YOU THEIR DUES NOTICES DIRECTLY TO YOU. RETURN PAYMENT FOR BOTH THESE ORGANIZATIONS TO THE ADDRESS THEY PROVIDE ON THEIR DUES NOTICES.**

RAILROAD HERITAGE ALLIANCE (RHA) DUES

Kati Phelps, membership chairman, sent out another RHA Dues Request recently. Please get your RHA dues in AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

APRIL 2017 EXCURSION ANNOUNCED!

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum is pleased to announce its Spring 2017 Rail Excursion through the Scenic Hiwassee River Gorge in East Tennessee. Excursion date is set for Saturday, April 1, 2017. The excursion will offer an opportunity to ride the rails through the one of the most beautiful river gorges in the United States as the railroad tracks travel along the Hiwassee River. The rail trip will take a 50-mile, 3-1/2 hour round trip rail excursion along this beautiful river to the famous "Hiwassee Loop".

General seating is offered on this excursion, providing passengers with comfortable cushioned seats with large windows. Historic 1950's-era diesel locomotives will pull vintage enclosed climate-controlled coaches with rest rooms. Passengers will be asked to move from one side of the aisle to the other before the return trip to ensure that every passenger will be able to view all the scenery in secluded areas along the line.

Pricing will be announced soon at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill



Jim Magill working on a Crescent Harbor window.

The Watauga Valley Mechanical Team is looking for more volunteers. As most of you know, the team is composed of volunteers with all kinds of different experiences. We now have five operating passenger cars and it takes a lot of manpower to keep the equipment up and running. We need volunteers to help with all kinds of projects, even if you do not have any mechanical experience. The team is a great bunch of guys and gals enjoying working together to keep our equipment up and running on the rails. Work days are Tuesday's 9am to 5pm and on Saturdays from 9am to 12 noon. If

you're interested in volunteering and/or tired of lying around the house during the winter months, call the Watauga Valley office at (423) 753-5797 and leave a message that you are interested in volunteering at the Jonesborough Coach Yard. We'll see what you can do to help and get you scheduled.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum over the past couple of months. As of press time the car is headed back to the Jonesborough Coach Yard.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum over the past couple of months. As of press time the car is headed back to the Jonesborough Coach Yard.

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum the past couple of months. It will remain at the NCTM for future trips.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): Is in winter storage at the Jonesborough Coach Yard. Extensive work has been done on the heating and air conditioning ductwork; new toilet and window repair has been going on over the last couple of months.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATV 100): Plans are being put together for possible upgrade. At left: Mike Tilley found the “Clinchfield” (and “Crescent Harbor”) resting peacefully at a wintry Coach Yard.



If you aren't reading the digital copy of this newsletter, you're missing out on beautiful color and live links to related information. Call our office today at (423) 753-5797 to switch from paper to electronic copies. A tree will hug you.

In the News

Chuckey Depot and Museum Update

Work on the Chuckey Depot and Museum at Jonesborough has been progressing at a fast pace. The depot building has been completed along with paving of parking lots and installation of new side walks. Opening date is planned for May 2017. Volunteer forms will be sent in the next newsletter.

In the photo at right, Mike Tilley found the depot and SOU X450 covered with a blanket of snow. The newly paved (and plowed!) parking lot can also be seen.



AARP Ranks Cass #10 among World's Top 12 Train Trips

[Text from AARP e-letter] A former logging line now protected by a West Virginia state park, this unassuming 1901 route packs a wallop of Appalachian scenery into four-hour round-trip excursions from May through October. Pulled by a chuffing steam locomotive, trips leave Cass - a preserved turn-of-the-century company town - and dive into deep woods before climbing 11 miles up to Bald Knob. Once there, you'll find a 4,700-foot-high overlook that offers sweeping vistas of the valley below - and, on clear days, all the way into neighboring Virginia. Other trips ranked:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. VIA Rail "Canadian" | 5. Bernina Express (Swiss) | 9. Bergen Railway (Norway) |
| 2. Grand Canyon Railway | 6. AMTRAK'S "Ethan Allen" | 11. Arkansas & Missouri RR |
| 3. Napa Valley Wine Train | 7. Durango & Silverton NGR | 12. AMTRAK's "Cascade" |
| 4. ALASKAN "Denali Star" | 8. AMTRAK's "California Zephyr" | |

Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Swaps Cars with TVRM

Passengers aboard the WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD can expect a more authentic experience after railroad officials exchanged unused train cars with a Tennessee-based railroad company. "It's swapping heritage for heritage," John Garner, WMSR superintendent said. Four inoperable scenic railroad cars were given to the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga in exchange for four 1950s stainless steel Budd passenger cars used on the B&O and two heavyweight cars dating back to the 1920s. According to WMSR officials, the cars it's sending to Tennessee have multiple issues. The passenger cars given to WMSR held no historical value to the Tennessee railroad and were rarely used. [Cumberland (MD) Times-News, November 15, 2016 via "High Green", Chesapeake Railway Association]

Hurricane Matthew Damage to CSX

“The East Coast Champion” (Florida East Coast NRHS) published these photos of the damage incurred by CSX from Hurricane Matthew last October. The newsletter cites 4 miles of track as being underwater from Salters, SC to Kingstree, SC due to the swollen Black River. Besides freight traffic, the damage suspended service of AMTRAK’s “*Silver Star*” and “*Silver Meteor*” between New York City and Miami and its Auto Train between Lorton, VA and Sanford, FL.



For Your Reading Enjoyment ...

Trains Magazine has published on their web site a wonderful history of the CSX “Santa Claus Train” written by Ron Flanary. Entitled “Yes, Virginia (and Kentucky and Tennessee) There Is A Santa Clause”, the article can be viewed for free on *trains.com* on this page: <http://tinyurl.com/hlhcp4n>. Look for a beautiful 1976 shot of CLINCHFIELD No. 1 – the “One Spot” – at the head end while goodies and Christmas cheer are being dispersed at Ft. Blackmore, VA.

While on the subject of reading enjoyment, we continue to solicit donations of railroad books to our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library. You can bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call our office at (423) 753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books.



Upcoming Events

N&W No. 611 2017 Excursions Announced

The **FireUp611** e-letter has announced the schedule for the upcoming N&W #611 2017 excursion season and that tickets are **ON SALE NOW!** To purchase tickets, go to <https://www.showclix.com/events/24306> or call (844) 613-0611 extension 1, 9 am to 9 pm Mon - Fri and noon to 5 pm on Sat – Sun.

- April 8, 2017 - The Virginian, Spencer, NC to Lynchburg, VA
- April 9, 2017 - The Charlotte Special, Spencer, NC to Charlotte, NC
- April 9, 2017 - The Piedmont Limited, Spencer, NC, to Greensboro, NC
- April 22, 2017 – The Roanoker, Greensboro, NC to Roanoke, VA
- April 23, 2017 – The Roanoker, Greensboro, NC to Roanoke, VA
- May 6, 2017 – The Cavalier, Lynchburg, VA, to Petersburg, VA
- May 7, 2017 – The Cavalier, Lynchburg, VA, to Petersburg, VA
- May 27, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 27, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA
- May 28, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 28, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA
- May 29, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 29, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA

SOUTHERN RAILWAY No. 154 Photography Charter

Friday, June 16, 2017: Join Southern Rail Productions for a night photography session with SOUTHERN RAILWAY no. 154 at the Three Rivers Rambler water tank on the riverfront in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee. This photo shoot, hosted by Southern Rail Productions and directed by Steve Barry will start promptly at 9:00 pm. The photo shoot will feature actors and props to give the photographs an authentic appearance, optimal lighting will allow for both photography and video. Tripods are highly recommended.

Saturday, June 17, 2017: The day photography session is set to begin at 7:00 am. Departing from the Knoxville, Tennessee depot, SOUTHERN RAILWAY no. 154 will lead the excursion on the point of a period 1940's freight consist. The day will feature many picturesque photo runbys, including new photo locations for steam. Period automobiles will be placed in prime locations throughout the day to add to the authenticity of the photographs. No. 154 is set to wear a special paint scheme for both sessions.

More information: <http://southernrailproduc.wixsite.com/southern-rail/charters>.



15th Annual
NC Railroad Expo!!

Saturday, April 8th
Hickory Metro Center
9am-3pm

275 tables of Model Trains,
Videos, Books, Locks, Lanterns
Five Operating Layouts
Adults \$5, under 12 free

www.tarheelpress.com/Trainshow

Photo Gallery ...



Mike Tilley caught NS Train 165 hauling a surprise in its consist through Jonesborough: two ex-LEHIGH VALLEY F7A engines! Chatter on our facebook page states that the units were originally going to be used on the PIEDMONT & NORTHERN RAILROAD but that P&N didn't have any use for the units; Iowa Pacific Holdings (which operates the NC state-owned P&N) decided to move the locomotives from Ranlo, NC, where they were stored, to the GRENADA RAILROAD in Mississippi (another IPH operation).

Mystery Photo

The photo at right, from the Wayne Manning collection, shows what appears to be an industrial switcher in front of SOUTHERN'S Rogersville, TN station. Little is known about the locomotive, neither the manufacturer nor the owner, nor the date the photo was taken for that matter.

The tracks, at the end of the 14-mile Rogersville Branch from Bulls Gap, are long gone, but the building has been beautifully restored and serves as home to the Rogersville Heritage Association and the Tennessee Newspaper and Printing Museum.

Anyone having any information regarding the locomotive is encouraged to contact us with such at wataugavalley@gmail.com.



PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2017

The WVRHS&M program committee is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2017. Please call (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in offering a program this year. We are looking for speakers interested in presenting a railroad related subject. And as always we're looking for DVD and slide shows. A good example would be the "Ghost Railroads" of East Tennessee, where maybe we'd get an answer to the questions posed above.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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