



Whistle Stop

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

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Big South Fork Scenic Railway

Several WVRHS&M members will be treated to exciting railfan activity on June 24th as they travel to Stearns, KY and ride the BIG SOUTH FORK SCENIC RAILWAY. Pictured above is one of the line's motive power, EMD-built SW9 switcher #107. [Megan Kegley photo]

June 26th General Membership Meeting

WVRHS&M will conduct our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, June 26th, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. The program will again be presented by Doug Zimmerman. In May, Doug presented a DVD entitled "Steam in North America". Meeting time ran out before it could be concluded. As it was so enjoyed by those attending, the continued part will be shown this month by popular demand.

Ask anyone attending in May - you do not want to miss this program.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Our sympathy is extended to Jim and Becky Magill in the loss of Becky's mother and to Dan and Judy Freeman in the loss of Judy's brother. Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers.

Please keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Bob Yaple, Kati Phelps, Nancy Jewell, Suzie Tilley, George Ritchie 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 will enjoy the upcoming summer activities.

BRISTOL STATION DAY

The first Bristol Station Day event was held at the Bristol Station on Saturday, May 23rd, 2017. The event featured speakers, vendors and discussion on the arrival of AMTRAK to Bristol in 2019. Operation Life Saver was also on hand. Watauga Valley RHS&M had 12 volunteers to man the tables and give out railroad material, excursion and membership information. The attendance at the event was larger than expected and plans are already underway for next year.

SUMMER EXCURSION ON THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD

WVRHS&M's 2017 Summer Train Excursion from Bryson City to the Nantahala Gorge, NC will be held on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD on Saturday, August 12th. Tickets will go on sale soon; a sign up sheet for car hosts will be available at the May General Membership meeting.

WVRHS&M / NCTM FALL AMTRAK EXCURSIONS

WVRHS&M and NCTM are still working on details for this autumn's AMTRAK excursions, planned to operate on November 4th and 5th, 2017. Information will be announced at the June meeting; be the first to hear.

WVRHS&M Uniforms

A new supplier has been found and now WVRHS&M gear (shirts, hats, jackets and name tags) are now available. There's an order form included with this newsletter.

2017 PROGRAMS REQUESTED

The WVRHS&M Program Committee is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2017. Please call the office at (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in presenting a program this year. We are looking for member speakers or if you know someone that would come and present a railroad related program. And as always we're looking for DVD and slide programs.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

Four of our cars had AMTRAK PC1 inspections (annual inspection for privately-owned cars in AMTRAK trains) and two of the cars had PC2 (additional equipment inspection) truck roll out inspections.

With all the activities at the coach yard, we need you on a Tuesday or Saturday to volunteer to help; we have a project for everyone. Come on down to Jonesborough one of the two days or call the office at (423) 753-5797 and let us know your interest and availability.

ROLLING STOCK



"Climchfield" business car (WATX 100): on display in the round house at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. At left we see the "100" on its journey to North Carolina at the end of NORFOLK SOUTHERN train #134-03.

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): At the Jonesborough Coach yard getting ready for the Baltimore excursion.

"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400): in operation at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539): At the North Carolina Transportation Museum ready for the Baltimore Excursion

"St Augustine" coach (WATX 500): At the Jonesborough Coach Yard getting upgrades

Railroad History Research ...

The Library of Congress has placed online nearly 25,000 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, which depict the structure and use of buildings in U.S. cities and towns. Maps will be added monthly until 2020, for a total of approximately 500,000. For the rail historian, this means another resource for investigating abandoned rail right-of-ways, location of former structures, and the like. For more information, go to <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-17-074/?locl=earn>.

In the News

CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH

The proposed opening date for the museum of June 29th has been rescheduled for August 2017. All volunteers to host at the museum should have been notified by the Jonesborough Town Hall that they need to sign all required paper work. If you still want volunteer, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 and leave your name.



An Advance Train Control System (ATCS) was installed in the waiting room of the Chuckey Railroad Depot / Museum at Jonesborough on June 10 by Mr. Mack Muirs (at left). The system will show on the board where trains are located and are approaching the Jonesborough area. The Chuckey Depot / Museum's location on the railroad is shown on the board between Sand Valley and Piney Flats.

CSX REPORTS DRAMATIC OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

[*Trains NEWSWIRE*] CSX Transportation executives say their railroad is improving by operational leaps in the 10 weeks since E. Hunter Harrison took over as CEO. The improvements are headlined by a 52-percent jump in on-time performance. "We're at the beginning of an amazing transformation," Chief Financial Officer Frank Lonegro said at a transportation conference on May 18. Train velocity was up 14 percent and terminal dwell was down 11 percent as CSX rolls out Harrison's precision scheduled railroad operating model. On-time originations rose 16 percent, to 91.6 percent, while on-time arrivals jumped to 87.6 percent from just 57.8 percent.

CSX also is becoming more efficient by hauling the same amount of tonnage on far fewer trains. The railroad's revenue-ton miles have held steady while the active train count has fallen by 15 percent. "You're going to continue to see that improve," Lonegro says. Lonegro credits Harrison for creating a winning mentality in the railroad's Jacksonville, Fla., headquarters while driving "an unheard of" pace of change. "He really has hit the ground running and has begun to implement precision scheduled railroading across our railroad," Lonegro says. Keys to the improvements include running a balanced train plan, keeping terminals fluid, and reducing handling en route. "Hunter's philosophy is move the freight as far as you can as fast as you can and touch it as few times as you possibly can," Lonegro says. And that means don't put traffic through hump yards if you don't have to. "At CSX historically we have been a big believer that the most efficient way to class traffic is through a hump yard," Lonegro says. "Hunter has totally debunked that."

CSX has already converted four hump yards – Toledo, OH; Louisville, KY; Hamlet, NC; and Atlanta - to flat-switching facilities. As part of the conversions, [continued on next page]

train plans have been modified so that traffic bypasses the yards, with the exception of cars destined for those locations. The remaining eight hump yards are under “heavy evaluation” Lonegro says. More hump yards will be converted to flat switching this quarter, he says, and CSX ultimately will be left with just three or so hump yards. The final number could be two or four active humps, Lonegro adds. CSX has stored 551 locomotives and parked, scrapped, or returned more than 22,000 freight cars so far this year as it is able to move freight more efficiently.

Is CSX hearing negative reactions from shippers or seeing volumes shift to Norfolk Southern as it makes operational changes? “We’re really not seeing any market share shifts,” Lonegro says, although he acknowledges that the potential for service missteps as changes unfold. But he says customers are getting faster transit times, improved on-time performance, and better cycle times on their freight cars. With better service and lower costs, CSX should be able to grab business from trucks, and not just intermodal business.



AMTRAK SUES UNION STATION LANDLORD

[Trains News Wire via “POTOMAC RAIL NEWS”] A lawsuit filed by AMTRAK claims that its landlord at Washington Union Station breached the terms of its lease by posting advertising for a competitor, Delta Airlines. The case, filed on May 25th, 2017, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, says that under the terms of its lease agreement, landlord Union Station Investco shall not install “any signs ... that advertise transportation services that compete” with AMTRAK. According to the complaint, Delta Airlines competes with AMTRAK because Delta “has regular flights between Washington National Airport and Dulles International Airport to numerous locations also served by AMTRAK, and particularly major metropolitan areas along the Northeast Corridor of the United States, including New York City and Boston.” The complaint also says that on May 5th and May 16th, AMTRAK sent letters to USI demanding the advertising be taken down. USI refused.

On June 3rd, District Judge Randolph D. Moss denied AMTRAK’s request for a preliminary injunction that would have forced station management to remove the Delta advertising, according to court documents. The opinion says that AMTRAK failed to show it will suffer an irreparable injury if the advertising was not taken down. In an affidavit, AMTRAK filed copies of web pages that shows fare comparisons between the *Acela* and an airline shuttle and taxis between Washington and New York. The judge ordered AMTRAK and Union Station Investco to file status reports by June 9th to see if the case will be dismissed or scheduled for further proceedings. In a prepared statement during the week of May 29th, AMTRAK said, “We intend to protect our interests.”



FUTURE of LONG DISTANCE TRAINS in QUESTION???

The National Association of Railroad Passengers has circulated an alert warning that the proposed Federal budget would kill all long distance trains on AMTRAK, thereby eliminating train service to 220 cities and towns. Regionally, this would mean the “*Cardinal*” that serves Cincinnati would be gone. Those concerned should contact their House Representatives and Senators to support AMTRAK. For more information, <https://www.narprail.org/news/releases/white-house-budget-will-kill-AMTRAK-service/>.

 **AMTRAK RAMPING UP for ROANOKE**

[William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief, *Railway Age*] AMTRAK on June 5th began operating non-scheduled, non-revenue trains between Lynchburg and Roanoke, VA to train and qualify T&E (train and engine service) crews for new, extended Northeast Regional service expected to start in the fall of this year.

Northeast Regional service will extend from Lynchburg to Roanoke and will operate one round-trip seven days per week. AMTRAK, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), NORFOLK SOUTHERN and the city of Roanoke have been working to bring passenger rail service back to the city for the first time in four decades. The extended service will provide a same-seat trip to and from Roanoke and to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and other cities along the Northeast Corridor. Northeast Regional service to Roanoke will be the fourth expansion of intercity passenger rail in the Commonwealth of Virginia since 2009 following new or additional service to Lynchburg, Richmond, and Norfolk.

“The effort to expand rail options in Virginia has been made possible by the Commonwealth’s more than \$100 million strategic investment in NORFOLK SOUTHERN’s rail infrastructure, which makes this intercity passenger service extension possible,” AMTRAK said. “AMTRAK and DRPT continue a partnership to provide more intercity passenger rail travel in Virginia. Instead of driving on congested highway corridors like I-81, Route 29, I-95, and Route 460, travelers can use rail as a way to expand mobility and increase connectivity for travel throughout the regions served along the Northeast Corridor.”

 **NEWS from WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD**

[From various sources]

The WMSR and its contractors have received payments totaling \$128,772, according to Maryland State officials. A spokesman for the Maryland State Treasurer’s Office said on May 17th that two additional checks for \$30,000 and \$24,396 were in process; payments were to be completed by the next week, bringing total payments to \$183,168.

As a result, restoration work has restarted on 2-6-6-2 No. 1309 at the railroad’s shop in Ridgeley, WV. It’s estimated that restoration costs will be about \$1 million. The scenic railroad received a \$400,000 capital grant from the State in 2016. The payments made so far were drawn from this grant. It is hoped that the locomotive will make its debut sometime in the fall, but it will be another several weeks before the railroad can announce a date. WMSR Superintendent John Garner said that contractors have about eight weeks of restoration work remaining before the locomotive is ready to go. “We’ll be putting in the tubes soon,” steam locomotive restoration specialist Gary Bensman said. “And after that we’ll do the hydrostatic test.” If the test shows the locomotive will safely hold steam and water under pressure, the final steps will be reassembly work.

WMSR celebrated its return to Frostburg, MD on May 6th by hosting their official “*Return to Frostburg Celebration*” at the Frostburg Depot. WMSR had been unable to make its regular stop in Frostburg for more than a year after two mudslides brought the operation to its Frostburg terminus to a halt. Allegany County (MD) took out a \$1.7 million bond to assist in the rebuilding of the line.

Upcoming Events



JUNE 20-24: Annual NRHS Convention, Nashville, TN. Of note is the 64-mile chartered Tennessee Central Railway Museum's roundtrip from Nashville to Lebanon, TN. Registration: <http://www.nrhs.com/content/2017-convention>



JULY 1-2: 611 "hot" engine cab tour and whistle blowing. VMT, Roanoke, VA. <http://www.vmt.org/event/611-cab-tour-whistle-blowing/>

JULY 1 & 13: Tennessee Valley Railway Museum steam trip to Summerville, GA with steam. For details, go to <http://www.tvrail.com/>.



July 13-16: "The Baltimore Special", sponsored by NCTM. For details, go to <http://www.nctrans.org/Events/Baltimore.aspx>



AUGUST 12: WVRHS&M's 2017 "Summer Train Excursion" on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD. For more information, see <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>.

SEATS STILL AVAILABLE FOR THE BIG SOUTH FORK RAILROAD TRIP

A few seats are still available for our Big South Fork Train Excursion. If interested, please call Nick White at (276) 685-2386 ASAP. Pickup is in Jonesborough on Saturday, June 24.

100th Anniversary ...

July 15th of this year will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of noted CLINCHFIELD historian, author and Watauga Valley member James A. "Jim" Goforth. A native of Asheville, NC, Jim rose to the position of Chief Engineer for the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD. His achievements there included the building of the "High Line" around Johnson City, diverting rail traffic from downtown. Jim received many honors as a historian, having served on many historical organizations and authoring two books on the CRR: "When Steam Ran the Clinchfield" and "Building the Clinchfield". His contributions in the development of Watauga Valley as a historical society while serving as Historian and Newsletter Editor are innumerable. Jim enjoyed – and certainly looks the part – serving as "Conductor" on many of our excursions. Pictured at right is Jim posing in front of CRR executive car #112; he's signaling the engineer to release the brakes for an on-time departure of an April 1984 Watauga Valley excursion over his beloved railroad. [Fred Waskiewicz photo]



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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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Medium \$17 _____
Large \$17 _____
X-Large \$18 _____
2 XL \$19 _____
3 XL \$20 _____
4 XL \$21 _____
5 XL \$23 _____

Small \$17 _____
Medium \$17 _____
Large \$17 _____
X Large \$18 _____
2 XL \$19 _____
3 XL \$20 _____
4 XL \$21 _____
5 XL \$23 _____

Royal Blue – Port Authority Easy Care BUTTON UP Shirt (with new Chapter Patch)

Please specify MENS Long sleeve – No: S608 or MENS Short sleeve – No: S508

Small \$18 _____
Medium \$18 _____
Large \$18 _____
X Large \$19 _____

2 XL \$19 _____
3 XL \$21 _____
4 XL \$22 _____
5 XL \$24 _____

Royal Blue – Port Authority Easy Care BUTTON UP Shirt (with new Chapter Patch)

Please specify LADIES Long Sleeve – No: L608 or LADIES Short Sleeve – No: L508

Small \$18 _____
Medium \$18 _____
Large \$18 _____
X Large \$19 _____

2 XL \$19 _____
3 XL \$21 _____
4 XL \$22 _____
5 XL \$24 _____

HATS:

Athletic Gold Port & Company Six-Panel Twill Cap – No: CP80 - \$7.50 _____
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WINDBREAKER:

Blue Sport-Trek Sideline Jacket with flannel lining – No: (with new Chapter Patch) Adult
Small to 6 XL - \$25 – Size Needed: _____

NAME TAGS - \$10 each - _____ List names below to be added to name tags

Mail your completed form and check (no cash, please) to
WVRHS&M, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432 or bring
to a General Membership meeting.