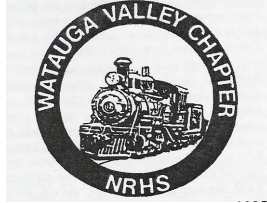

WHISTLE STOP



Volume 29 No. 2

February 2009

Mike Jackson, Editor

Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation

Next Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting is Feb. 23

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next general membership meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held February 23, 2009 at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 W. Millard St. Chapter NRHS National Director Jim Pahriss will present the program on the Niles Canyon Railroad. We had a full house for the January meeting, so let's do it again! Come out for a great night of railroading.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues notices have been sent out for 2009. Please get yours in to the membership chairman ASAP. It makes it so much easier if everyone can get the dues in before his/her membership expires. Please send back to the address on the dues' notices or just bring to the February meeting.

GRAND RE-OPENING OF THE BRISTOL TRAINSTATION

Our Chapter has been asked to be involved in the grand re-opening of the Train Station in Bristol. The event is planned for July 3rd and 4th. Plans at this time are to take the Chapter's Dining Car up for the event along with several other items. More details will be available soon on our involvement and events planned during that week in Bristol.

CHAPTER'S SPRING TRAIN EXCURSION TO NORTH CAROLINA

The Spring 2009 Excursion of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be a ride on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad on Saturday, March 28.

The excursion will feature a ride through the Smoky Mountains and spring countryside of Western North Carolina. The route is the former Southern Railway's Murphy Branch Line established in 1891 with its five percent grade. It features many bridges as well as the whitewater Nantahala Gorge.

The trip will begin in downtown Johnson City at 6:30 a.m., at the City Hall Lot on East Main St, where passengers will board a motor coach to Bryson City, N.C. Passengers will board the excursion train at 11:00 a.m. This 4.5-hour excursion covers 44 miles to the Nantahala Gorge and back to Bryson City.

The route travels the banks of the Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers and crosses Fontana Lake Trestle standing 100 feet above the lake and spanning 780 feet. After crossing Fontana Lake, passengers will enter the gorge.

There will be a one-hour layover at the gorge for sightseeing. Passengers will have several options for lunch. Bring your lunch, small coolers only, Chicken Buffet will be available for purchase on board train and for the first time the Watauga Valley Chapter is excited to offer dining in a historic dining car. A truly unique, on board dining experience in the grand tradition in the *Iron Horse Grill*.

On the return trip to Bryson City, passengers will have the time to shop, snack, and visit the Smoky Mountain Train Museum before returning to Johnson City via motor coach. Expected arrival back to Johnson City will be 6:30 p.m.

The railroad has become a favorite of film producers over the years. The train-wreck scene in the 1993 movie "The Fugitive," starring Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones, was filmed in Dillsboro along the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad. The wreckage of the set can still be viewed on outbound train excursions from Dillsboro.

The Great Smoky Mountain Railroad also was used in the filming of the 1996 comedy "My Fellow Americans," starring Jack Lemmon and James Gardner, when they stumble on to a charter train full of UNC-Chapel Hill fans headed for the NCAA Final Four. Train scenes in the 1998 movie "Forces of Nature," starring Ben Affleck and Sandra Bullock, also were filmed on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad.

Passengers can choose to ride in comfort in reconditioned coaches (windows that open and close and ceiling fans), open-air cars, crown coaches or a club car, which are climate controlled with large picture windows. All cars have grand views of the passing scenery. Clean restrooms are available on the train.

Nearby attractions include the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Cherokee Indian Reservation, and the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C.

Ticket prices for adult coach seats are \$79 and \$58 for child (2 to 12 years) coach seats. Adult crown coach seats are \$89 and \$68 for children (2 to 12 years). First class service Club Car seats are \$115 for anyone 21 years and older.

When ordering coach tickets, please specify open air or closed cars. Also, specify if you will accept an alternate class of service if your choice is sold out. Money will be refunded if you do not wish an alternate service.

To order tickets, enclose your check or money order along with the number of tickets and the class you choose. Send checks to Spring Excursions, Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432.

For questions about the trip, email: wataugavalley@wireco.net or write: Watauga Valley NRHS, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. Those interested in the trip can also visit the chapter at www.wataugavalleynrhs.org for a printable order form.

CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD TOUR

We are planning our Clinchfield Railroad Spring South End Tour for Saturday April 4, 2009. Plans are to start out in Johnson City and travel the complete South End of the former Clinchfield to Erwin, Poplar, Green Mountain Spruce Pine, Alta Pass, Loops, Thermal, Bostic, Chesnee, and Spartanburg. To end the day, we will eat at the very popular Wades Restaurant in Spartanburg, which is a favorite of CSX train crews. More details will be available at the February meeting.



Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS)

Chapter Meeting Minutes for January 26, 2009

The general membership meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS) was held January 26, 2009, at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN, 37604. There were 36 names on the attendance sheet. Chapter President Mike Tilley presided and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Nov. 2008 Excursion Report.** Mike said the November 1 and 2 excursions co-sponsored by the Watauga Valley Chapter and the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) were very successful, and there were few complaints, according to the surveys completed by the passengers. The 2009 excursions will include trips from Spencer, NC, to Charlottesville, VA, on October 31 and November 1. A possible trip to another location is being discussed but plans have not been completed. Mike is making a list of things that need improvement and will work with NCTM to solve these issues. He has been working on getting the car consist for the 2009 excursion.
2. **Other 2009 Excursions.** The Spring 2009 trip will be held March 28 and is a bus-train excursion on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad. Mike hopes the Chapter can sell six busloads on this popular train ride through the scenic western North Carolina Mountains. The Chapter will need at least two hosts for each bus. **Another Chapter Trip** on Amtrak will be held in the spring. On this two-day trip, Chapter members will travel by car pool to an Amtrak site, spend the night in a motel, and ride the train,

possibly to Washington, DC, or to Philadelphia, PA, and return the next day. Details will be announced later. **Mike also announced** that the Clinchfield (CSX) South End Tour, postponed last year, would be held in April. On this one-day trip, Chapter Member and CSX Engineer Tony King and Mike will guide the photo tour by car along the CSX line from Johnson City to Spartanburg, SC. This trip will feature numerous opportunities to see and take pictures of CSX trains in the world-famous Clinchfield Country south of Erwin that includes the Loops! Additional plans and a date for this Saturday tour are in Mike Tilley's column on page 2.

3. **Guests and New Board Members.** Mike welcomed Mr. Barry LeFever on Knoxville, TN, a guest and an At-Large member. Mr. LeFever is an engineer on the Knoxville & Holston Railroad. **In addition**, Mike introduced the new members of the Chapter's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors elected Bill Beagen at the January 24 meeting. Mr. Beagen will serve the two years that remain on the term of the late Bill Smith who passed away in November 2008. Joining Bill on the Board are Carol May and Nick White who were chosen in the recent Chapter elections from a slate of three candidates for three-year terms.
4. **New Business.** Mike reported that a committee will be formed will be formed to work with Jeff Forrester and Chapter Webmaster Fred Waskiewicz on the Chapter's website. If you want to work on this committee, please see Mike. **The Mechanical report** presented by Chief Mechanical Officer Jim Magill and Asst. Mechanical Officer Bob Yaple is included in this issue of the *Whistle Stop*. The Mechanical Crew is doing an outstanding job, and there is always a need for more volunteer workers. The crew works every Tuesday and Saturday at the Chapter's Spring Street Coach yard in Jonesborough. If you want to volunteer, please contact Jim or Bob. They usually gather at the Yard around 8:30 or 9:00 a.m., each Tuesday and Saturday. **Upcoming programs** for the Chapter's monthly meetings will be given by Jim Pahr in February (the 23rd), Gary Price in March (the 23rd), and Bob May in April (the 27th). The Chapter's meeting for May 25, 2009, will be held at the historic and recently renovated Bristol Train Station, Bristol, VA. Details of this important meeting will be announced later.
5. **Program.** At the conclusion of the business meeting, Mike introduced the program, a video tour on Train 92 of the Clinchfield (CSX) line south of Erwin, TN, into the mountains, the Loops, the gorge and through the tunnels of North and South Carolina, ending at Spartanburg.
6. **After the program**, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Mike Jackson, Acting Secretary

Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple

Chapter Cars Back in Yard for General Overview

All three of the Chapter's lease cars are now back in the Spring Street Coach Yard and our crew plans a general overview of their condition. We'll make changes as required.

Crescent Harbor. The trucks are now out, and the car is on jack stands. Cleaning and evaluation of the trucks are in progress by the mechanical crew. So far, no significant problems have been discovered. All brake parts and the shocks will be removed to facilitate cleaning, repair, and painting. The Amtrak-approved wheel sets and HEP conduits will be installed prior to re-assembly under the car. The lounge baseboard heaters have been tested and are now in service. Work continues on the wiring and rework is underway on all lighting fixtures that are not new.

General Work. A heater has been installed in the boxcar to alleviate the chill, making working conditions much better. We have reversed the swing of the track gates to better utilize the limited space for the cars. Due to tape failure, the water supply froze and broke. The system has been reworked and a new tape has been installed.

Volunteers Welcome. Chapter members are invited to come and help us at the Yard on Tuesdays and Saturdays. For more information, please call Jim Magill, chief mechanical officer, at 423-543-3287 or Bob Yaple, assistant chief mechanical officer, at 423-753-9017.

Member Notes – February Whistle Stop

The "NRHS News" that arrived in your mailbox early this month has several items of interest to Watauga Valley Chapter members. Articles and pictures of the excursions last fall and the art work of Casey Price are "must reads."

Good news for Mike and Betty Jackson's son, Patrick, is that the loss of fingers and/or use of his right hand will not be as severe as was first feared after his accident. Please keep Patrick in your thoughts as he recovers. Also please remember Jim Calhoun and Walter Byrd as they deal with health concerns.

As always, please let us hear from you about friends, family members and other Chapter members who would welcome a card or call. Call the Chapter phone number 423-753-5797 or send a note to WVC, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. We do want to keep in touch.

Nancy Jewell, Contributor

Winter Railroading in South Carolina by Gary Price

Norfolk Southern has a policy of shifting its maintenance of way gangs south during the winter months to take advantage of milder weather to allow our employees to keep working. The former Conrail territories have been blasted with severe weather the last few months, so those gangs have been moved down to eastern Virginia and North Carolina just to be able to work. The N&W region gangs, like the one I work on, have to move into Southern territories to make room on our division for our fellow "northerners" to have work for winter.

Just before Christmas, my gang packed up our camp cars, loaded our equipment, and headed to the "Southern" side. We set up camp and unloaded in Columbia, South Carolina. The weather was in the 60's, and we were happy to be working in the mild winter weather that the south had to offer. We broke ground in downtown Columbia near the Game Cock football stadium and started heading eastward toward Winnsboro, S.C. We were scheduled to replace roughly 800 ties per mile, and re-tie 9 switches on this 30-mile journey. We would work all week in near 70 degree weather, go home each weekend to temperatures in the teens, and it was a real shock to the ole' body!

However, things changed on Tuesday, 1-20-09. That was the day that winter found us! On that morning we awoke to cold temperatures and snow! One day we were wearing jackets, and the next day we had to wear our full winter gear. Columbia ended up with a couple inches of snow, the first snowfall on record in 5 years. The local railroaders accused us of bringing winter weather down the road with us. Ironically my gang was in Columbia 5 years ago when they received their last snowstorm of around 6 inches. So maybe we do bring it with us when we go.

The railroad does not stop when it snows, and even our gangs keep pressing on through winter weather, but I am thankful that my company allows me to go south in search of warmer weather.

As we finished up the job in Winnsboro, I was able to stop by the South Carolina Railroad Museum. The centerpiece of their exhibits is the Hampton and Branchville Railroad 4-6-0 number 44. I was intrigued by the restored, tiny Civil War era stock car that was dwarfed by the other larger cars and equipment, but I could imagine it hauling Confederate soldiers to the battlefield. Next...Back to the N&W! **Gary Price, Keeping the ole' N&W safe...one tie at a time.**

From Past Editions of the Whistle Stop

15 Years Ago: The Chapter's monthly meeting included a slide program on all the events the Watauga Valley NRHS was involved with during 1993, such as the Chapter's two successful excursions, the rebuilding program of the passenger cars, the annual picnic and banquet, and many other things "that made 1993 a good year," said Chapter President Mike Tilley. Also, Mike reported in that issue that the members enjoyed the 12th annual Chapter banquet and the guest speaker, Kelly Wrinn from the North Carolina Transportation Museum. A final note from the Whistle Stop 15 years ago is an item that the former Norfolk & Western depot

in Marion, VA, had been completely restored inside, and further plans are to restore the outside of the building. **February 1994 Whistle Stop.**

10 Years Ago: Editor James Goforth commended 44 Chapter members for their 1148.5 hours of work at the Chapter's Coach Yard in Jonesborough since the fall 1999 excursion. Most of the volunteer workers came Saturday mornings, but others came during the week. Everyone who volunteered, "did something which helped to get [these projects] completed," editor Goforth commented. In addition, the Chapter's spring 1999 excursions from Kingsport, TN, to Sevier, NC, and to Elkhorn City, KY, were announced. **February 1999 Whistle Stop.**

5 Years Ago: Chapter Webmaster Fred Waskiewicz gave readers a "Brief Tour of the Chapter Web Site" in an article that included information on the different pages of the Chapter's website. Also, editor Richard Freeman included a membership application in the February 1999 edition and challenged members to invite a friend or colleague to join the Watauga Valley chapter. Fun with activities, trips, volunteer work at the Yard, and good fellowship are among the reasons to invite a friend to join the Watauga Valley Chapter. **February 2004 Whistle Stop.**



Rail News with Jeff Jones

JACKSONVILLE, FL - CSX Corporation has announced preliminary fourth quarter earnings per share of 63 cents. These results include a non-cash impairment charge of approximately 27 cents per share related to the write-down of its investment in The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Excluding this charge and insurance gains of 1 cent in the prior year quarter, comparable earnings per share would be approximately 90 cents, which represents a 6% increase over the prior year quarter. Overall revenues are expected to be approximately \$2.7 billion for the quarter, up 4% from the prior year period. This was driven by higher yields and fuel recovery, which are expected to offset the impact of significantly lower volumes. Operating income, on a comparable basis, is estimated to increase 16 percent to \$692 million, resulting in an operating ratio of approximately 74.1 percent. "Our team's commitment helped CSX weather the difficult economic environment, which continues to impact our business," said Michael Ward, chairman, president and CEO.

WASHINGTON - During 2008's last week, which included Christmas, freight traffic remained down for U.S. railroads. For the period ending Dec. 27, their carloads dropped 21.8 percent to 124,061 units and intermodal volume fell 21.7 percent to 200,365 units compared with totals from 2007's last week, according to the Association of American Railroads. Through 52 weeks, U.S. roads originated 16.6 million carloads, down 2.2 percent, and 11.5 million containers and trailers or containers, down 4.2 percent year over year. Total volume decreased 1.2 percent to an estimated 1.73 trillion ton-miles.

Canadian railroads had a tough last week of 2008, too. Their carloads totaling 39,999 units declined 25.7 percent and intermodal volume totaling 20,621 units plummeted 35.5 percent vs. totals from 2007's last week. Through 52 weeks, Canadian railroads' carloads decreased 6.3 percent to 3.8 million units, but intermodal volume rose 1.4 percent to 2.5 million units compared with full-year 2007 data. On a combined cumulative-volume basis through 52 weeks, reporting U.S. and Canadian railroads originated 20.3 million carloads, down 3 percent, and 14 million containers and trailers, down 3.3 percent year over year.

RICHMOND, VA - Passenger rail service hasn't been available to Roanoke (VA) since 1979, despite its roots as a rail town. But a state official told a state Senate panel Feb. 7 that – assuming funding is available and there's no conflict with freight trains run by Norfolk Southern Corp. -- there could be Amtrak passenger rail service up and running between Roanoke and Lynchburg and on to Washington by as early as 2015. From there, the state is looking at a further extension south to Bristol, possibly by 2020, said Kevin Page, chief of rail transportation for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The first step in what's become known as the TransDominion Express will come this fall, when a new Amtrak train will begin offering daily service from Lynchburg to Washington, linking commuters to Amtrak's Northeast Regional corridor service, which runs north to Boston. **[Editor's Note: We hope to have more information on this news item in our February supplement to the Whistle Stop that is handed out at the Chapter meetings and sent by email to other members who request it].**

The 2009 Annual Convention of the
National Railway Historical Society
will be sponsored by the National Society

Come to Duluth, Minnesota
Come to Steam on the Range



The Convention will be the week of
August 10th through the 16th, 2009

Events may include:

Inbound/Outbound special trains for the Convention
Steam pulled excursions Diesel trips
Museum visits Night photo session
Non railroad activities Banquet
Seminars by noted railroad authors

**Hotels include the Radisson Duluth
(Headquarters Hotel) and the Holiday Inn**
Rates start at \$99 per night

Mail the bottom portion of this page to:
John Goodman
8409 13th Avenue South
Bloomington MN 55425-1705

Notes

- Those who sign up for Advance Mailing will be sent the registration package at least 15 days before anyone else.
- The Advance Mailing Fee is \$15.00 for an NRHS member, a spouse, children and other family members living at the same address.
- The \$15.00, which is non-refundable, will be applied to the \$30.00 registration fee.
- The Advance Mailing Fee entitles the member's household to one registration package.
- Advance Mailing Requests must be post-marked by February 28, 2009.
- Members receiving an Advance Mailing may only purchase tickets for those persons listed on their Advance Mailing Request.
- Hotel information with discounted rates will be mailed with the registration packages.



Advance Mailing Request - Please Print

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Country: _____
Phone Day _____ Evening: _____
Email Address: _____
NRHS Membership Number: _____
Payment: Enclosed is a \$15.00 check payable to
NRHS Convention 2009
 Charge \$15.00 to my Visa / MasterCard
Credit Card No.: _____
CV Number: _____ (3 numbers on signature strip on back of credit card)
Name on Credit Card: _____
Exp.Date: _____ Signature: _____

Additional Persons Living at the same address

Name: _____ Name: _____
Name: _____ Name: _____
Name: _____ Name: _____

I don't want Advance Mailing.
Please mail me the registration package when it is available.

For this option:

•Registration packages will be mailed no less than 30 days after being mailed to Advance Mailing users.

•Ticket orders will not be filled until 30 days after Advance Mailing users.

•The full \$30.00 registration fee will be required with order.

Revised June 13, 2008

Watauga Valley NRHS member Paul Marcum's O-27 Layout

A Visit to the Clinchfield Southern Model Railroad

Article and photos by Paul Marcum

This model railroad was first conceived in the Spring 2007. The table structure was originally built in 1987 with my dad's help. The structure supported two different HO-scale layouts over time until Spring 2007. I was under the last HO layout trying to do some maintenance and repairs, but because of a physical condition which is getting worse, I made a dramatic decision to change the scale of the layout to an O-27 three-rail layout. I already had collected numerous O-27 rail cars and some three-rail locomotives (both steam and diesel). All I had to do was resurface the layout. I sold some of the old HO layout, some HO-related buildings, wiring, Code 83 track and turnouts with motors, signals, lights, RR sound simulators, and small die-cast vehicles.

With the money I received from those parts, I was able to resurface the layout and do some custom painting of the layout surface. Then I mounted a rebuilt Lionel™ ZW transformer and also laid & secured MTH™ track. The mainline has O-54 curves. The two spur lines contain each at least one O-72 curve, a de-coupler and an end lighted bumper post. The spur also contains miscellaneous short lengths of MTH™ make-up track.

I then proceeded with the basic wiring of the layout, using color-coded telephone wire and screw-type barrier terminal strips. I spent many days under the layout wiring kind of like a groundhog! Some days, it got pretty warm; I did have the use of a fan that helped considerably. I purchased several buildings that were properly wired back to networks and controls near the ZW transformer. I added scale die-cast vintage vehicles for the roads including an old-style Greyhound bus. The buildings included a church house, a RR depot, a warehouse, a regular house of residence, an operating service station, and an operating Mel's Diner. There is a manually operated crossing gate and a manually operated three-over-three railroad signal.

I didn't have much luck with automation. There are also trees and a RR speeder shed with speeder. I have a simulated railroad sound device to use when I wish.



South; Hobbytown; Hobo Hobbies; Mike's Train House; Rail King; Lionel; Williams; Weaver; K-Line; Walters; Classic Toy Trains; O-Gauge Railroading; Joe Schauer; Lawrence Walters; Tex Parsons; James Skinner; Clyde Larkins; James Click; Lawrence "Darrell" Lane; Karen Lane; Robert Lloyd; William Ramey; Conley Peters; Robert Jones; Ed Reutling; Jim Milhorn; Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, Walter Byrd, and Carolina Clinchfield Chapter NRHS



Last Summer and Fall, I added small detail items such as miniature (in scale) people, barrels, front-end loader, 2-wheel hand trucks, scales, four-lamp flood light, Coca-Cola machines, etc.

I wanted the layout to have a 1950s-1960s feel. Also, I have Clinchfield as well as Southern engines and rolling stock. There are other various pieces of rolling equipment, too. I do minor servicing on my trains including lubrication and minor cleaning. If I have major problems, I have model railroader friends who will help me if I ask. Thanks guys!

Please let me invite you to visit my little railroad March-June 2009 and again September, October & November 2009. Thank you!

Contributions in labor, support, and products: Bachmann; Sidetrack Hobbies

**Railway Historical Society
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New trucks that will be used on the Watauga Valley Chapter's *Crescent Harbor* coach were lifted by crane into the Spring Street Coach Yard at Jonesborough, TN, in November 2008. The car is undergoing extensive restoration work by chapter volunteers, and the mechanical crew can always use more helpers. See Bob Yapple's column inside the *Whistle Stop* for more news from the mechanical crew. Photos contributed by Art DeVoe and Duane Swank.