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# Whistle Stop



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Mike Jackson, Editor

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Things got off the rail the last week of May at Green Mountain, NC, just south of Erwin, TN, when Q696 derailed. Traffic was re-routed for a few days until the derailment was cleared. Photo submitted by Mike Tilley.

## **Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting June 22**

### **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The next general membership meeting will be held Monday, June 22, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Chapter NRHS National Director Jim Pahriss will have an excellent program, so bring a friend and hear details about upcoming excursions.

### **AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSIONS**

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation are happy to announce the fall excursion schedule.

Saturday, October 31, 2009, The Virginia Autumn Train from Spencer, NC, to Charlottesville, VA, will be run. The Virginia Autumn Train will offer a rare daylight trip through the rolling hills of the Carolinas and the western part of Central Virginia, using Amtrak aboard vintage rail equipment.

The excursion departs at 7 a.m., from the N. C. Transportation Museum in Spencer and arrives at 8 a.m., at the newly restored Greensboro (NC) Amtrak Station. Passengers can board

at either location before travelling a railroad line that crests the legendary White Oak Mountain, passes the Dan, Roanoke, and James Rivers, and arrives in Charlottesville, VA, at 12:00 p.m. Home of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville is full of history, and a short walk to the historic downtown mall offers unique shopping and dining opportunities. The train will depart Charlottesville at 2:45 p.m., returning to Greensboro at 6:30 p.m., and in Spencer at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 1, 2009, The Blue Ridge Special will travel one of the most beautiful railroad routes in the eastern US as we climb the Blue Ridge Mountains on our way to Asheville NC. "The Land of the Sky," Asheville is the home of the Historic Biltmore Village, a short walk or shuttle ride from where our train stops. Visit the Biltmore shops and restaurants and breathe the cool, refreshing mountain air during our convenient layover.

Our train will cross the Catawba River on a large trestle, and later it will twist through the famous loops near Old Ford. This engineering marvel takes us over the Blue Ridge on a 13-mile twisting route that pierces seven tunnels and nearly crosses itself several times. Our train's large viewing windows are specially designed just for this type of breathtaking scenery.

Departing the N. C. Transportation Museum, we will run south to Salisbury, then west to Asheville on the former Western North Carolina Railroad. We will pass through Statesville, Hickory, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort and Black Mountain before arriving in Asheville, NC. We'll depart Spencer 7:00 a.m., arrive in Asheville at 12:01 p.m., depart Asheville for the return trip at 3:00 p.m., and arrive in Spencer at 8:00 p.m.

TICKETS WILL GO ON SALE JUNE 23, 2009. FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CALL THE NCTMF AT 704-636-2889 EXT 232 OR VISIT WEB SITE AT [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org)

### **SUMMER HIWASSEE EXCURSION**

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is pleased to announce its Summer 2009 Rail Excursion through the Scenic Hiwassee River Gorge in East Tennessee. Excursion date is set for Saturday, July 18, 2009. The excursion will feature the opportunity to ride the rails through the most beautiful river gorge in the United States as the railroad tracks travel along the Hiwassee River. The rail trip will take a 50-mile, 3 ½ hour round trip excursion along this beautiful river to the famous "Hiwassee Loop."

The special attractions of the trip will go thru the Narrows, where the Hiwassee River flows through rock channels and the Bald Mountain Loop. The track actually passes over itself on a high trestle during a corkscrew climb up the mountain near Farner, TN. Tracks along this route parallel the river for most of its length providing views of the lower gorge.

Regular scheduled passenger trains operated until 1968, and the last freight train traveled the Old Line in 2001. The railroad was originally built to haul ore from the copper basin in Copper Hill, TN. The Tennessee Overhill Association took over ownership of the rail line in 2004.

This will be a unique opportunity to get to ride on the historic railroad. The train is general seating and features comfortable cushioned seats with large windows. Historic 1950's-era diesel locomotives will pull the Vintage enclosed climate controlled coaches. Passengers will be asked to move from one side of the aisle to the other before the return trip to ensure that everyone will be able to view all the scenery in secluded areas along the line.

Our trip will begin in downtown Johnson City, TN at 7:15 a.m., on the morning of July 18, 2008, at the State of Franklin Parking Lot (corner of Legion St. and State of Franklin), where passengers will board a motor coach to Etowah, TN. We will also pickup passengers at the Century 21 parking lot at 2040 E. Andrew Johnson Hwy, Greeneville, TN, at 7:45 a.m. Lunch will be on your own before we board the train at 1:15 p.m., with the train departing at 1:30 p.m., and arriving back in Etowah at 4:50 p.m. Our motor coach will depart Etowah at 5:00 p.m., with expected arrival back into Greeneville at 8:15 p.m., and in Johnson City at 8:45 p.m.

Ticket cost is \$80.00 per person. Meals are not included. Ticket includes train ride and motor coach to and from Etowah, TN. To order tickets, enclose your check or money order (sorry cash or credit cards not accepted) along with the number of tickets. Send check to Summer 2009 Rail Excursion, Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. You can also go on line where there is a printable order form at [www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org) - click on excursion trips. Please mark on your order form whether you're loading on the motor coach in either Johnson City or Greeneville. For questions about the

trip e-mail [wataugavalley@wireco.net](mailto:wataugavalley@wireco.net) or write Watauga Valley NRHS, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. **Mike Tilley, Chapter President**

## **Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS) Chapter Meeting, May 25, 2009**

The Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS met Monday, May 25, 2009, at remodeled and restored Bristol Train Station, Bristol, VA (**photo below**), with 32 members and guests in attendance. Chapter President Mike Tilley presided. After Jack Maloney moved and Paul Haynes seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes for the April 2009 meeting, Mike welcomed members and visitors. Then the following business was covered:



1. **AMTRAK Excursion in the Fall.** The trips are scheduled for October 31 and November 1. Mike said 40 to 50 volunteers will be needed to work the excursion. He has reserved rooms for the workers, and forms for volunteer workers will be handed out at the June meeting. In order to save money, the Chapter will lease three passenger vans to transport the volunteers from

Jonesborough to Spencer, NC, and back. Ticket sales will begin the last week in June.

2. **Etowah Bus-Train Excursion.** Mike announced a bus-train excursion is planned July 18 to Etowah, TN, aboard the Hiwassee Loop train. At least two busses will be used to transport passengers to the Gee Creek loading area for the scenic train ride into the gorge. Departure time from Johnson City is 7:15 a.m., and the busses will return at 9 p.m.
3. **Jonesborough Days/Bristol Train Station Grand Opening.** Mike said the plans for Chapter participation in Jonesborough Days is unknown at this time, but the Chapter will take part in the Grand Opening of the Bristol Train Station July 4. We will need volunteers to work the two-day event. More information will be announced at the June meeting
4. **Newsletter by Email.** Mike asked everyone at the meeting to give their email address to newsletter editor Mike Jackson so a second attempt can be made to send the newsletter by email. The problems are being worked out, and Mike Tilley said it will save the Chapter money on printing and postage if we can email as many copies as possible.
5. **Mechanical Report.** Bob Yapple said all work is still progressing. The work crew will replace the trucks under the *Crescent Harbor* as soon as possible. The recent work session was very successful, and Bob thanked all the volunteers who came out and worked.
6. **May 25 Program.** After the business meeting a power point presentation was made of the Bristol Train Station and everyone was given a tour of the historic depot.

**Betty Jackson, Secretary**

## Member Notes – June *Whistle Stop*

**WELCOME** to new members Clarence and Catherine Graham of Kingsport, Tennessee. We hope they will come to the membership meetings, enjoy the Chapter activities and the Whistle Stop.

**Our sympathy** is extended to Bob Yaple in the death of his cousin, Cameron King, on May 4, 2009, in the Johnson City Medical Center. Mr. King had moved to Johnson City after the **death of his wife in 2000 in Florida.**

**We have a number** of members and friends who have health concerns. Among these are Walter Byrd, Patrick Jackson, Jim Magill, Mike Jackson, Harold Pruet, Ken and Agnes Kerns, Coy and Jo An Edwards, Mike Sanford, Barbara Howard, and Mary Hart. Please keep these folks in your thoughts.

**As always,** let us know of members or friends to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The Chapter phone number is 423-753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Thanks for helping us keep in touch. **Nancy Jewell, Contributor**

## Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple

**GENERAL** There was a great turnout of volunteer workers on Saturday, May 2, and Friday, May 15, and a lot of work—some of it not so nice—that relieves the mechanical crew of these chores was accomplished! Some of the work done included the sorting and stocking of stored supplies in the storage trailer, cleaning all sorts of stainless steel parts for the *Crescent Harbor*, and cleaning the underside (**photo below**) where the trucks are in preparation for painting and undercoating. On behalf of the crew, THANKS for your help and “Whew, everyone worked hard!”



**ROLLING STOCK** All three cars are getting some attention to maintenance in preparations for upcoming trips.

**CRESCENT HARBOR** The “A” truck is now complete and ready to roll under the car. The “B” truck needs some final welding done by Johnny Jones, and it will be ready to “fly” and be rolled under the car, hopefully by June 1. Work continues on the HEP and 27 pin communication systems and rewiring of the entire car.

**Volunteer workers** are always welcomed.

Please see either Jim Magill, Chief Mechanical Officer, or Bob Yaple, Assistant Chief Mechanical Officer.

## Proposed NS Intermodal Facility that Concerns Jefferson County, TN, residents Tops Rail News

**DANDRIDGE, TN** - Trying to quell growing discontent among residents, Jefferson County Mayor Alan Palmieri told a gathering of about 100 people in late May during a press conference that the possibility an intermodal rail facility will locate in the county is still in the earliest stages and is not a sure thing.

Jefferson County residents in recent weeks have been uneasy about reports of an intermodal rail operation because the proposal has not been made public although its existence was known. Norfolk Southern Railway has announced its interest in building a railroad yard where truck trailers and containers can be transferred between trains and trucks. The Interstate 81 corridor between Knoxville and the Tri-Cities is considered by Norfolk Southern to be ideal because of the access to a main rail line and interstates 40, 75 and 81. The event, Palmieri said, was to publicly address the issue and quiet fears.

The mayor said any proposal to place the facility, which would cover hundreds of acres, in Jefferson County remains too early in the planning process for any information to be made public. “To speak of this as a done deal in no way reflects the true standing of this project,” Palmieri said.

According to a recently published numbers by the University of Tennessee, the Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility has a price tag of \$50.4 million. An adjacent business and logistics park, according to the study, would cost \$82.5 million. The intermodal facility could create up to 150 Jefferson County jobs by 2025, the study said. Off-site development and infrastructure costs would total just over \$23 million.

**JACKSONVILLE, FL-** Lester Passa, CSX Corporation vice president for strategic planning, will address the Bank of America and Merrill Lynch 2009 Global Transportation Conference in New York City on Thursday, June 11, 2009, at 8:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Passa's presentation will focus on the company's financial performance and its core strategies to better position the company in the current transportation environment.

**On Memorial Day weekend**, more than 27 million drivers crowded American highways for the first holiday of the 2009 Summer Driving season. They were enticed to the roads by a 40 percent drop in gas prices from 2008. Drivers encountered congested highways and construction delays, but CSX Transportation (CSXT) was doing its part during the Memorial Holiday weekend in reducing congestion, improving safety on the roads and decreasing air pollution. "One train can carry the load of more than 280 trucks, freeing room for approximately 1,100 passenger cars," said Tony L. Ingram, executive vice president and chief operating officer, CSXT. "As Americans hit the road this summer, [CSX wants the public to know that] the freight rail industry is doing our part to ease the congestion that Americans will face on the highways."

#### **From CSX News**

**NORFOLK, VA-** On June 1, Norfolk Southern Corp. marked the 10th anniversary of the Conrail integration, Progressive Railroading reported. On June 1, 1999, the Class I acquired about 60 percent of Conrail – an acquisition that added 7,200 miles of track and 10,000 employees to NS' operations. The Conrail transaction returned competitive rail service to the Northeast for the first time in 20 years, according to NS. During the past decade, the Class I has spent about \$10 billion to improve track, equipment and facilities, and upgrade technology. The railroad also sharpened its focus on customer service and made operational strides, such as the implementation of the Thoroughbred Operating Plan.

"As satisfying as it is to see how far we've come, it's more exciting to look ahead," said NS Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Wick Moorman in a prepared statement. "Our progress has given us the strength to weather the current economic storm. Ten years from now, along with our partners, we will look back again with amazement at how far we've come together."

**Additionally, NS** also announced it won the 2008 Carrier of the Year Award from UPS Autogistics. The award recognizes the Class I for overall logistics excellence among North American railroads for the transportation of Ford vehicles. UPS Autogistics honored NS for its on-time delivery, quality, damage-free handling and total customer service. Last year, the railroad moved more than 1.4 million Ford vehicles. **Contributed by Jeff Jones**

## **Grand Reopening of Bristol Train Station Set July 4th**

Celebrate Bristol and the Bristol Train station Foundation are announcing that the newly restored Bristol Union Railway Station will have its Grand Reopening on Saturday July 4 in conjunction with Bristol's annual Star-Spangled Saturday celebration. According to Brad McCroskey, event manager of the facility, "the timing of this event is significant to the history of the train station as it was dedicated on July 4, 107 years to the day. "This event will complete a ten-year \$5 million dollar renovation under the direction of the nonprofit Bristol Train station Foundation. The foundation and both city governments jointly purchased the former Railway Station in 1999 following its use as a shopping mall and years of disrepair.

The station was constructed in 1902 by John P. Pettyjohn and Company of Lynchburg, Virginia and the finished brick work was laid by Bristol resident John J. Fowler, who worked on Bristol's finest commercial buildings and residences. Today it is one of only a few rail stations of its era and prominence remaining built by Norfolk & Western Railway. "This station also not only represents the 150-plus year history of rail service in Bristol", according to Celebrate Bristol Chairman Tim Buchanan, "but the very reason the community exists. "In 1980 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places for the building's architectural and transportation

significance. The renovated facility was completed in the fall of 2008 with modern amenities for meetings and special events, space for business tenants and potential Amtrak rail service.

The dedication and grand reopening will begin at 2:00pm following the Star-Spangled Saturday Parade and events at Cumberland Square Park in downtown Bristol. Bristol Train Station plans for July 4 include an O. Winston Link photographic exhibit, a railroad art exhibit by the Art of the Highlands and artwork by the children of Bristol. Music will be provided by Bristol's Own Dixieland Band and Theatre Bristol will present historical portrayals of notable Bristol citizens. Dignitaries from both the states, railroad executives, contributors and others instrumental in the station's renovation have been invited to attend the events of the day.

There will be numerous events in downtown Bristol on July 4 so it is recommended that the public come early and make it a day for the entire family. For the train station event, Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd will be closed at 1:30pm and overflow parking will be available at First Baptist Church. Other activities of the day will include a 10:00am parade, live music and food at Cumberland Square Park and a large Antique Automobile Club of America (AACCA) sanctioned car show across from the Train Station. Other events will be announced at a later date. For more information on the Grand Reopening events at the Bristol Union Railway Station contact Brad McCroskey, events manager, at 276-494-7485. **Contributed by Bristol Train Station**

## Gary Price-Keeping the Ole N&W Safe...One tie at a time

On Saturday morning May 9, 2009, I packed the family into the trusty ole Pontiac Van and headed north on I-81 to Roanoke. The O. Winston Link museum was holding an event to elaborate the fifth anniversary of the museum, they appropriately dubbed it "The Celebration at the Station", considering that the museum is housed in the former Norfolk and Western passenger station, the title fit perfectly. I knew that there would be several displays and events going on for the whole family, but was unsure what all to expect.

As I made the sharp right hand turn onto Shenandoah Avenue, I knew that this would be an extra-ordinary event, as sitting on Norfolk Southern's Shenandoah Valley main-line was none other than the famous Norfolk and Western Railway, A class, number 1218 complete with an auxiliary water tender. Norfolk Southern had removed it from the Virginia Museum of Transportation the night before and pulled it down to the Museum for the "Celebration".

After paying a very reasonable five dollar entry fee I walked down to the track side platform and to my surprise, found 2 Norfolk Southern executive F-units and three Norfolk Southern office cars on display on the opposite end of the track as well. The kids immediately ran to the 1218 and was amazed at the size of the ole steamer, it was good to see her again, but I



still recall the glory days of 1989 and 1990 when she was blasting effortlessly toward Radford and Morristown with a sold out Watauga Valley NRHS excursion train in tow, now she sets cold and lifeless, no fire in her belly or coal in her tender. After a few photos of the kids with the 1218, we strolled on down to the executive train display.

**Left Photo: Casey and Emily Price with an old friend, the N&W 1218!**

On display from Norfolk Southern was F-A #4271 and F-B #4275 along with three office cars named Virginia, Claytor Lake, and West Virginia. To my shock, all three cars were open and could be toured by the public, I was enamored by the beauty of the inside of these cars and could imagine all the "important people" who have toured the Norfolk Southern system from these very seats!

There were several kiddie activities lined up along the tracks under tents, kids could have their faces painted, play goofy golf, or grab a hot dog. O. Winston Link's personal Norfolk and Western caboose #518508 was open for tours and they served popcorn on-board. The Blue Ridge live steamers had a long section of track laid and was offering rides on a short train behind a Southern and a Norfolk and Western SD-40-2 lash-up in miniature.

Inside the Link museum among hundreds of his more familiar work, hang 10 recently found Link originals, ranging from loading tobacco on the Abingdon Branch to Southern Diesels on the point of a passenger train in Roanoke.

All in all, the family had a great time in Roanoke and I topped it off by taking the wife and kids by Salem to see my Norfolk Southern camp car and get a feel of what my railroad life is like while on the road.

**Gary Price,**

**Keeping the ole' N&W safe...one tie at a time.**



**View of equipment from Top floor of the Link Museum at the NS Roanoke Yard on May 9.  
Photos by Gary Price.**

### ***The Whistle Stop***

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Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the Chapter members, officers or directors. Items of interest are welcome and will be credited to the author; however, because of space constraints, all submissions are subject to editing.

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Mike Jackson, editor, Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation.

Mike Tilley, Nancy Jewell, Richard Freeman, Bob Yapple, Art DeVoe, Jim Pahr, Gary Price,

Nick White, Jeff Jones, and Betty Jackson, contributors

Send correspondence to [ki4ojomichael@gmail.com](mailto:ki4ojomichael@gmail.com)

**Railway Historical Society  
Watauga Valley Chapter  
P.O. Box 432  
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

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**Chapter Historian Gary Price poses with the bosses train at Roanoke Yard on May 9. The NS Office Train passed by Mike and Betty Jackson's home, located adjacent to the NS Appalachia, VA, to Bulls Gap, TN, line early on the morning of May 21. Gary saw the train that afternoon en-route from Bluefield to Roanoke.**