

Whistle Stop



Volume 29 No. 7

Mike Jackson, Editor

July 2009

Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing/Circulation

Watauga Valley NRHS Meeting Set for July 27

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next general membership meeting will be held Monday, July 27, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Richard Baker will have an excellent program on the Southern Railway Passenger and Freight Operations in the 50-60's. Details on the Fall Autumn Excursion to Charlottesville and Asheville will also be announced. Bring a friend and come out for enjoyable evening of railroading.

AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSIONS

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation (NCTM) are happy to announce our fall Excursion schedule. All members who want to work the trips please complete the enclosed Excursion Workers Form and return back at the July meeting or mail back in by August 22, 2009. Please Mail to Watauga Valley NRHS/TRIP COMMITTEE, P O Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. These two rare mileage fall excursions are ones that you do not want to miss.

Saturday, October 31, 2009, The Virginia Autumn Train, Spencer, NC - Charlottesville, VA

The Virginia Autumn Train will offer rare daylight trip through the rolling hills of the Carolinas and the Western part of Central Virginia, using Amtrak and vintage rail equipment.

The excursion departs at 7:00 a.m., from the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer and arrives at 8:00 a.m., at the newly restored Greensboro 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, before arriving in Charlottesville, VA, at 12:00 p.m. Home of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville is full of history. After a short walk to the historic downtown mall our patrons will find unique shopping and dining opportunities. The train will depart Charlottesville at 2:45 p.m., and arrive at Greensboro at 6:30 p.m., and return to Spencer at 8 p.m.

Sunday, November 1, 2009, The Blue Ridge Special, Spencer – Asheville, NC

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.

Known as "The Land of the Sky," Asheville is the home of Historic Biltmore Village, located 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, then later twist through the famous loops near Old Fort. 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 NC Railroad. We will pass through Statesville, Hickory, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort and Black Mountain before arriving in Asheville. We'll depart Spencer 7:00 a.m., and arrive Asheville 12:01 p.m. That afternoon we will depart Asheville at 3 p.m., and return to Spencer by 8:00 p.m.

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW. FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THE NCTMF AT 704-636-2889 EXT 232 OR VISIT WEB SITE at www.nctrans.org. Please note all Dome Tickets have been sold out.

SUMMER HIWASSEE EXCURSION

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is pleased to announce that all tickets have sold out for the Summer 2009 Rail Excursion Saturday, July 18, 2009, through the Scenic Hiwassee River Gorge in East Tennessee. We appreciate all the hard work that Chapter members put into selling out these popular trips.

BRISTOL TRAINSTATION EVENT

The Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS was invited to participate in the Grand Opening of the Bristol Train Station on July 4, 2009. The Chapter cars were moved to Bristol, VA, Norfolk Southern yard and placed on the engine track near the Bristol Train Station. The event started on July 2 with Dinner in the *Moultrie* for special guests. On Friday, July 3, the chapter displayed the #1317 Live Steamer in the main room of the station for the reception given to all that were involved in restoring the station. After the reception guests were treated to a special meal in the *Moultrie*.

On July 4, the Grand Opening of the station was held and hundreds toured the station and the Chapter's cars, the *Clinchfield* and *Moultrie*. The final day of the event featured Lunch and Dinner in the *Moultrie* provided by the world famous Troutdale Restaurant of Bristol.

I would like to thank the following Chapter members who volunteered their time in helping out with the hundreds of people who saw our live steamer and toured the cars during the event.

**Nick White, Penny May, Mike & Lois Tilley, Duane & Harriet Swank, Gerry Slemper,
Dave & Laura Doughty, Frank Rohrer, Bob Yapple, Jim Magill, Richard Freeman,
Jim & Helen Calhoun, Jack Maloney, Jim & Charlotte Pahriss, Paul Haynes, Bob Schubel,
Gary & Casey Price, Tom & Kati Phelps, & Randy Moore.**

LAYING RAILS IN BRISTOL

The Southern Railway Historical Association and the Norfolk & Western Historical Society will sponsor a multi-group meeting about railroads and modeling, past and present, at the Bristol Train Station on October 17, at 9:00 a.m. The event will start with a photo session of the Watauga Valley NRHS passenger equipment in Jonesborough at 6 p.m., on October 16. At 7 the group will head to the Mountain Empire Model display. Other presentations include:

1. Putting diesel sounds in models with Rick Bell
2. Southern's 50ft boxcars with George Eichelberger
3. Prototype Modeling tips and Tricks with Tony Sissons.
4. Railroading Abingdon, VA, with Bob Hundman.
5. Many more events planned.

Registration Fee \$15.00

Co-Sponsors

Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS

Smokey Mtn. Division/NMRA

Carolina Clinchfield

Mt. Empire Model Railroad

By Mike Tilley, Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter President

RAILDAYS/NS Family Days held at NCTM June 13

Every year the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) at Spencer, NC, has a railfan gathering known as RailDays. This year was an extra-special event as the NCTM partnered with Norfolk Southern (NS) to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the opening of Norfolk Southern's massive Linwood Yard. Southern Railway's Linwood Yard officially opened on June 11, 1979, and the surplus facilities at Spencer were closed and donated that same year to the state of North Carolina to form the NCTM. Norfolk Southern also planned to hold an employee Family Day to celebrate the workers, past and present, at Linwood Yard and the entire Piedmont Division.

Several NS displays were advertised, and news that NS CEO Charles "Wick" Moorman would be in attendance caught my attention. So I decided to go and take my kids and a teenager from my church, who is an aspiring railfan.

Upon arrival to the museum grounds, I discovered that the day's events were going to kick off over at the Roundhouse with speeches and dedications, so we headed that way and got a good spot to hear the speeches. First up was NCTM's own Roy Johnson, who welcomed us and informed us about the guest speaker and the equipment dedications that would be taking place throughout the facility. Next up was current *Trains* Magazine Editor, and former Charlotte area resident, Jim Wrinn, who spoke on the founding of the museum and his early involvement with day to day operations. He then welcomed Mr. Wick Moorman to the stage. Mr. Moorman praised Norfolk Southern's employees and the museum volunteers on a job well done and reaffirmed NS support on historical efforts like that of the NCTM. Finally, Jack Salt with the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) spoke on the grant process and how the grants are being used nationwide to restore vintage railroad equipment and structures.

Immediately following the speeches, a dedication of NC Ports Authority #L-3 diesel was held. I won't go into detail on all the dedications, but this one was so unique, and the story has to be told. The 45-ton #L-3 was built in 1943 by General Electric and spent its entire career in Wilmington, NC. The state of North Carolina donated the L-3 to the NCTM and NRHS grants and funds provided the restorations. Officials wanted to dedicate the switcher in a special way so they found an old RC Cola bottle from the 1940's and filled it with water from the actual lake where the switcher spent its career. The bottle was then sealed and, at the dedication, the L-3 was christened by the smashing the RC Cola bottle onto the front coupler! I felt that it was a proper tribute with a good 'ole North Carolina flavor to it.

The other dedications held throughout the day were as follows: 1940 Norfolk and Western H-9 Coal Hopper #59159 donated by NS; a former Norfolk Southern signal bridge, donated by NS; the new West Lead track extension to allow longer train rides, a federal grant funded the track expansion; NC Lining Bar Gang; a new exhibit showcasing early railroad track workers; the Buckingham Lining Bar Gang was on hand to demonstrate past techniques; and finally, the new deck on the Pedestrian Bridge that was donated by FiberCon Industries.

During the dedication ceremonies, I had the rare opportunity to spend time with the "Big Boss", Mr. Moorman. We discussed the F-units and how they came to be, as well as the optimistic outlook that NS has on the economic future. I also personally thanked him for Norfolk Southern's efforts to keep as many employees working as possible.

NS really pulled out the red carpet for museum visitors and employees with a total of seven modern diesels on display. On hand were NS Genset #3850, NS GP-59 #4610 "Southern Green", NS GP-59 #4629 in Operation Lifesaver paint scheme, NS SD70 M-2 #2720 open for cab tours, NS ES-400C #7560, also open for cab tours, NS F-A unit #4270 in executive paint scheme, and NS F-B unit #4274 in executive paint scheme. Coupled to the F-units was NS Executive Coach NS-#1, the "Virginia".

NS had a hospitality tent set up for employees only and served free burgers and drinks all day and gave out door prizes every hour. The NS Lawmen band provided entertainment, and the NS Police Department was on hand to discuss their job duties to keep NS safe.

The NCTM pulled out all the stops as well with three trains running ten 25-minute trips a piece. The passenger train consisted of five passenger coaches and was pulled by NCTM's own F-unit #6133 and E-unit #6900. A caboose train was run with NCTM's Norfolk and Western GP18 #620. The following caboose paint schemes were represented with a Seaboard, a Winston-Salem Southbound, a red Norfolk and Western, a blue Norfolk and Western, and at the end, a red wooden C.C. & O (Clinchfield) caboose. As an extra bonus, the museum ran a vintage Freight train led by NCTM's Southern GP30 #2601 with several vintage freight cars and a freshly painted Southern Bay-window caboose.

In addition to all the normal displays, attendees could enjoy motor car rides and turntable rides. R. J. Corman was on hand with two "sidewinders" to demonstrate how they re-rail a derailed Gondola. The annual CASI chili cook-off was sent sweet smells into the air and kept everyone hungry. Children present had craft areas, book reading and music just for them to enjoy. The Watauga Valley Chapter was well represented with 4 members manning a table advertising our fall excursions.

After all was said and done, the 2009 NCTM RailDays/NS Family Days was a great success for all who attended. **Gary Price, Keeping the ole' N&W safe...one tie at a time.**

RAILDAYS/NS Family Days at Spencer!

Right, Norfolk Southern CEO Wick Moorman speaks to the folks attending RailDays at Spencer.



Left, Gary Price had a chance to speak with the NS CEO!

Right, the Caboose Train, one of three trains that ran ten times during the day!



WV NRHS Members:

We are in the process of redesigning the Chapter's web site. A major goal is to make the site as useful and informative to Chapter members as possible. Another goal is to "market" the Chapter to the general public to increase awareness of our Chapter's activities and to recruit new members. To do that, we need your input on what you would like to see on the site. What information, links, photos, etc. would you like to see that what make the site a useful resource to you and informative and attractive to the public. Please email your suggestions to Fred Waskiewicz at waskx2@comcast.net or Nick White at nickwhite@hotmail.com.

Thank you! Fred Waskiewicz and Nick White

Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple

GENERAL – The cleaning continues at the Chapter's Spring Street Coach Yard in Jonesborough, TN. We have been working on the aftermath of a major project—the trucks for the *Crescent Harbor*. Richard Freeman continues to search e-Bay to purchase hole cutting equipment. A much-needed knock out punch was procured at half the price of a new replacement with five- or six-hole saws to boot! This equipment will be used on the Head End Power (HEP) and 27-pin systems on the *Crescent Harbor*. We have used our "new" mag drill twice now and wonder, how did we make it without it!

ROLLING STOCK – Work on the Chapter's three leased-cars continues with normal maintenance and "fix-it" items. We are also working on a new style End of Train (EOT) bracket for Norfolk Southern's (NS) latest EOT device. A prototype bracket has been developed and will be checked out by NS personnel.

CRESCENT HARBOR – The work on the trucks is completed! The underside of the car in the truck area has been painted and is ready for re-installation. June 10 was scheduled for the move but the crane to be used broke down the night before. Since the Powell Company has only one of these cranes, a 90 tonner, there was little choice but to wait to make these repairs. A larger crane will not fit in the limited space available so the work was postponed until June 15 when it was completed! Work also continues on rewiring the entire *Crescent Harbor* and some refinement of the car's air conditioning system.

Bob Yaple, Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer

NS/BNSF Explores Electrification of Some Lines

NORFOLK, VA - A Norfolk Southern Railway executive said his company is exploring the potential to eventually electrify some freight rail lines in connection with passenger rail corridors, but the chief executive of Union Pacific Railroad said he is not considering freight electrification, John Boyd wrote recently in the *Journal of Commerce*. Earlier this year, BNSF Railway's chairman, president and CEO, Matthew K. Rose, said he was in talks with transmission line companies that want to install new power lines in the railroad's right of way. And he said BNSF was exploring whether that could help the railroad convert large parts of its sprawling western network to electricity.

Industry sources indicated other large carriers were looking at the same options, as Congress and the Obama administration push to upgrade the capacity of the U.S. electricity grid and tie in more alternative power sources including wind energy farms.

In an interview outside the North American Rail Shippers Association annual meeting in Chicago, NS Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Donald W. Seale said "we're having some discussion and review" about the potential to at some point electrify some track and trains.

"We at NS don't see rail electrification in the near term" for freight, Seale said, but he added that could start in connection with passenger rail corridor development. Norfolk Southern's territory covers the Southeast, Midwest and many parts of the Northeast.

James R. Young, the chairman, president and CEO of UP, said "we are seeing an increase in the number of inquiries from (transmission line) companies that are interested in our right of way." But, "we haven't extended it as far as saying would we do anything with electrification," he said. "Right now, that is not on my radar screen." UP is the western rival to BNSF; both have networks that range across the West and into the Midwest.

Contributed by Jeff Jones

Welcome to our new Chapter Members!

Tom and Kati Phelps of Asheville, NC

Tom is president and Kati is secretary of the Asheville, NC Chapter NRHS

We also welcome Bernard Gelb of Wheaton, MD

We hope you enjoy your Chapter membership and participate in our activities!

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

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Johnson City, TN
Permit No. 61

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Olin Mathieson Reefer used for shipping dry ice from the Saltville, VA, plant. According to a former worker at the Norfolk & Western yard at Saltville where this picture was taken in November 1971, Olin shipped several of these 40 footers each day with dry ice. Photo by Mike Jackson.

**WATAUGA VALLEY CHAPTER NRHS
P. O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37605-0432
423-753-5797**

EXCURSION WORKERS FORM

OCTOBER 31 and NOVEMBER 1, 2009, CAR HOST ASSIGNMENT REQUEST
FORM

CHAPTER MEMBER _____ PHONE (

) _____

CHAPTER MEMBER _____ PHONE (

) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

I WOULD LIKE TO SIGN UP FOR FIRST CLASS CAR HOST ON THE SPENCER, NC, TO CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, ROUND TRIP EXCURSION ON OCTOBER 31, 2009 AND THE SPENCER, NC, TO ASHEVILLE, NC, ROUND TRIP EXCURSION ON NOVEMBER 1, 2009.

CHAPTER WILL PROVIDE FREE TRANSPORTATION TO SPENCER, NC, AND BACK TO JONESBOROUGH, TN. WE WILL LEAVE JONESBOROUGH AT 7:45 AM ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30. YOU ARE ALSO WELCOME TO DRIVE DOWN TO SPENCER IN YOUR OWN CAR IF YOU WISH. THE CHAPTER WILL PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION BACK TO JONESBOROUGH ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AND ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2.

ALL CAR HOSTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE THEIR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS AT SALISBURY SUPER 8 AT A SPECIAL RATE OF \$54.00 PER NIGHT. YOU WILL NEED TO CALL 704-738-8888 AND ASK FOR WATAUGA VALLEY NRHS SPECIAL RATE.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY AUGUST 22, 2009. YOU WILL NEED ROOMS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30 AND SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31 - STAYING ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1 IS OPTIONAL.

ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO SIGN UP FOR THIS GREAT TRIP TO SERVE AS CAR HOST. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AT THE JULY MEMBERSHIP MEEETING OR MAIL IT TO: EXCURSION WATV, P.O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN, 37605-0432, BY AUGUST 22. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE CHAPTER OFFICE 423-753-5797.