

# Whistle Stop



**Volume 29 No. 8**

Mike Jackson, Editor

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Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing/Circulation

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## **Next Watauga Valley NRHS Meeting will be August 24**

### **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The next general membership meeting will be held Monday, August 24, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Bob Schubel will have a surprise guest speaker for the program. More details on the Fall Autumn Excursion to Charlottesville and Asheville will be announced. Bring a friend and come out for an enjoyable evening of railroading.

### **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. All members who want to work these trips please complete the Excursion Workers Form that you received in the last newsletter or call the chapter office at 423-753-5606 by August 22, 2009. Please Mail to Watauga Valley NRHS/TRIP COMMITTEE, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. The Chapter's phone number is 423-753-5797. These trips are two rare-mileage fall excursions that you do not want to miss.

The schedule for the excursions is:

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

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

Again, please let us know as soon as possible if you plan to work our fall excursions!

### **CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD NORTH END TOUR**

Since we had such a great success with the Clinchfield Railway South-end Tour recently, we will have the North-end tour on August 29, 2009. A sign up sheet will be available at the next Chapter meeting or you can call the Chapter's phone at 423-753-5797 and leave a message. The trip will be done as we did the south-end tour. The members who drive will have their fuel cost paid equally by the riders.

## **Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS**

### **Minutes for Chapter Meeting, July 27, 2009**

The Chapter meeting came to order at 6:30 p.m., on July 27, 2009, at the Johnson City Public Library. Mike Tilley, president, presided. There were no minutes of the June meeting available due to the absence of the secretary from the meeting (and no one else recorded the minutes). Attendance was 35 members, including several folks who came to their first meeting.

Mike recognized the first time attendance of retired Union Pacific locomotive engineer Gary Emmert of Greeneville, TN, who joined the Chapter last fall after moving here from Texas. Gary had no opportunity to attend the meetings previously due to a family emergency. Mike also noted the presence of new Chapter members, Tom and Kati Phelps of Asheville, NC. Tom has served as president of the Asheville Chapter NRHS, while Kati has been the Chapter's secretary.

#### **Old Business:**

Mike discussed the upcoming fall excursions out of Spencer, NC, on October 31 and November 1, and the Chapter's need of 50+ hosts and workers. The train consist will be 24 cars with 3 Amtrak locomotives. Mike reported that the press release will be going out to the papers this week. The Trip committee will start meeting soon. Mike asked for more members who plan

to work the excursion to sign up and attend the series of trip committee meetings. Please sign up so he will know the number of attendees and how to notify them of future meetings. Mike also reported that the Roanoke Chapter will be having a fall excursion, too.

The Hiwassee trip on July 18<sup>th</sup> was a huge success with three bus loads of passengers. The weather was great and the trip was a sellout.

Nick White gave a report on the revisions of the Chapter's website. This will be an important way of promoting excursions and activities. Nick asked that anyone who has pictures of the cars, the work done at the yard, etc., please share them with him to use them on the webpage. Nick also asked if anyone had a digital camcorder, please allow him to borrow it so there can be a video record of future trips and activities to use for programs and membership recruitment.

Mike announced that there will be another Spring Street Yard work session in September, possibly. The men will be doing the cleaning and other work while the women will be preparing the lunch for the crew.

#### **New Business:**

Jim Calhoun's warehouse in Erwin may be sold very soon, and the Chapter will need to move the motor car, trailer, and all the spare parts to another storage area until these items can be sold. Bill Hensley has a storage barn that he offered to store the car and items for a few months.

The North-End Clinchfield Tour with Chris Starnes and Tony King may possibly take place in early September. More information will be included in the August *Whistle Stop*.

Mechanical Report – Bob Yaple reported that all car work continues, and help is still needed if you can come. The whole crew is there on Tuesday (9:00-5:00) and Saturday (8:30-12 noon).

Programs for the remainder of the year will be:

August – Bob Schubel – Live Speaker

September – Nick White – Video about the Chapter

October – Excursion Workers' Safety Meeting

November – Duane Swank – DVD of the Wreck of the 611

December-- Christmas Dinner, The *Moultrie* diner will not be in the yard in time for our Christmas dinner so we need to move the location of our dinner to another place, possibly the Bristol Train Station. Bob Schubel will call to see if there is a room available on a Saturday in early December for the dinner that will begin around 12 noon.

The program tonight was supplied by Richard Baker. The video was on the Southern Railway Passenger and Freight Operations in the 1950 and 1960's.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**Betty Jackson, Secretary, Mike Tilley, President**



## **Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple**

### **General**

The cleaning continues. We have built an additional work bench in the box car to replace the make-shift one we were using for the truck re-hab. All of the lumber for this project was donated by our Chapter's treasurer, Duane Swank. Thank you, Duane!

### **Rolling Stock**

Maintenance continues. Norfolk Southern personnel tried their new type of End of Train device (EOT) on our proposed bracket and found it to be OK. We can now re-work the EOT brackets on all three cars and locate them so they will no longer hit the end of the car on tight turns such as in the classification yards.

### **Crescent Harbor**

Work on the trucks continues with hooking up hoses and brake rods, center pins, and shock absorbers. We are fine tuning the air conditioning system (we need it!) in an attempt to use the stainless steel 200 gallon water tanks to supply water for the car's air conditioning system.

We found leaks in both tanks. This will be a job for our welder member Johnny! It never ends at the Yard. Work continues on the rewiring project with newly refurbished light fixtures showing up all over the car. All this work looks great! Come on down to the Yard and help us! We're there Tuesdays and Saturday mornings.

**Bob Yaple, Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer**

## **Glade Spring Railroad Days Held, Milestones Celebrated, Reports Chapter Historian Gary Price**



On July 18, the town of Glade Spring, Va. held its annual Railroad Days celebration in its downtown square. The storefronts were decorated with many railroad items and memorabilia, and vendors set up tables and booths to sell items such as crafts, fresh produce, and lemonade to name a few. Our own Dave Doughty was on hand with a table set up, representing Operation Lifesaver, The children were allowed to take brightly colored chalks and decorate the asphalt in the square with colorful signs of youth. Casey, being the artist he is, jumped at the opportunity and drew a large chalk rendition of the 611 (above) in front of Dave's table for all to enjoy. The highlight of the evening was The Miss Coal Train Womanless Beauty Pageant! No, I did not enter, but maybe next time.

Not much to write about this month, just a few milestones to share.

### **20 YEARS WATAUGA VALLEY NRHS MEMBERSHIP**

As I was going through some paperwork, I realized that this month marked my 20th anniversary as a member of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the NRHS, this brought back a flood of fond memories that took me back to even before I became a member.

It was on Saturday, June 11, 1983. I was only 15 years old and my mother bought me a ticket to ride with the WVC on a Bristol to Radford round trip behind Savannah and Atlanta #750. I boarded the train alone and quickly found my way to a seat in one of the old N&W coaches on the train. This excursion was the most exciting thing that I had ever done in my life, and the fact that

Mom and Dad trusted me to do it all by myself made the day even more special. After that trip I looked forward to the WVC flyers to come in the mail every spring, and I rode three more Bristol based trips the following years.

On Sunday, June 25, 1989, on the return trip from Radford behind the N&W 1218, I struck up a conversation with the late Bill Hobbs, and he suggested that I join the chapter, but I felt that Marion, Virginia, was too far away from Johnson City for me to get involved. He sent me back to the concessions car to get an application for membership, and that is when I met Harold Smither, who convinced me to go ahead and give it a try, so I did, and I have enjoyed every year of my membership since! I have met so many great people with the WVC through the years, and have had to say goodbye to several dear friends. I feel sure that the future of our chapter is in great hands, and I never dreamed that I, myself, would be raising up a second generation of WVC members, so here's to another 20 years!

#### **1,000 SAFE DAYS ON THE JOB!**

As it has been widely reported, Norfolk Southern has been awarded the Harriman Safety Award for a record 20th year in a row, but have you ever thought about the individual levels that make awards like that possible. For example, on Monday, July 27, 2009, my Production Gang, NS T&S 20 completed 1,000 safe days worked. This accomplishment ranks us 6th overall in our division for the best safety record! We were awarded a Polo shirt and a hat with the NS logo, our gang designation and 1,000 safe days embroidered on both. On an individual level, I recently completed 13 years of service without an injury. It is records like this that help insure that Norfolk Southern remains one of the safest transportation companies in the world!

**Finally, several people** have reported seeing a UPS train westbound on the Bristol line. This unusual sighting is a test train that NS has been running between Baltimore and Memphis. NS will begin building a terminal in Memphis in the new future, and the Crescent Corridor will provide a vital link for new trains to be handled efficiently.

**Gary Price**

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



## **Three Rivers Rambler – Knoxville's Historic Train Ride – Schedules Fall & Christmas trains**

The Three Rivers Rambler Scenic Excursion Train in Knoxville is wrapping up their summer season and will be offering Fall & Christmas excursions later this year. A number of dates are currently planned in September and October, with many more dates planned in late November and December for the annual Christmas Express Trains. Chattanooga Traction Company EMD SW-1 #4, recently repainted to its original paint scheme, is scheduled to operate the diesel trips in September and October while Washington & Lincoln Baldwin 2-8-0 #203 will operate the steam powered Christmas trains.

**A complete schedule and additional information on the Three Rivers Rambler can be found by visiting [www.threeriversrambler.com](http://www.threeriversrambler.com)**



*Chattanooga Traction Company #4 was built in 1947 by EMD and later became a Southern Railway and Norfolk Southern locomotive (as #1002) before being retired.*

*Washington & Lincolnton 2-8-0 #203 was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1925 and served on various short lines around the southeastern US before being retired. It was later restored by the Gulf & Ohio Railways, owner and operator of the Three Rivers Rambler.*

*Additionally, the Gulf & Ohio is restoring Southern Railway 2-8-0 #154 to operating condition. Photos, progress updates and history of #154 can be found by visiting [www.southern154.com](http://www.southern154.com) Copy and photos contributed by Chapter member Chris Starnes*



## **Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club News**

The location of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club (MEMRR) is in the George L. Carter Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in Johnson City, TN.

Officers are Fred Alsop (president), John Carter (vice-president), Art Daniels (secretary), Duane Swank (treasurer), Ted Bleck-Doran (newsletter editor), and John Edwards (webmaster).

Business meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., at ETSU in room 312 of the Brown Hall Science Building. A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at El Torito on the State of Franklin Road near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza parking lot, starting at 5:45 p.m. Visitors and those interested in joining the MEMRR are invited to attend. Work nights are held weekly on Thursday afternoon and evenings, starting at 4:30 p.m. Open viewing and operating of the layout is held every Saturday from 10:00 a.m., to 3:00 p.m.

**From the July 2009 MEMRR *Signal Bridge*.**



## **Rail News from Jeff Jones**

**WASHINGTON** - Defects in railroad tracks were the leading cause of train accidents in the first five months of 2009, says a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) report, according to John Boyd in the Journal of Commerce. While there were fewer track defects than in the same 2008 period, human causes and train equipment defects - two other FRA accident categories - both declined more sharply this year as falling traffic levels due to the recession helped bring down the total number of train wrecks. The safety agency said out of 736 train accidents this year through May, track defects were the primary cause in 239 or 32.47 percent of them. A year earlier, 1,042 accidents were reported with 351 due to track problems, for 33.69 percent.

This does not include such incidents as road crossing or trespass, in which automobile drivers or pedestrians got onto tracks and were struck by trains. About half the train accidents take place in rail yards. Only 57 accidents through May involved train collisions, down from 75 a year earlier. In that 2008 period, human factors were the main cause in 372 accidents or 35.7 percent, the most of any single FRA category. This year, human causes were down to 233 for 31.66 percent.

**NEW MARKET, TN** - It has caused him no end of political heat, but Jefferson County (TN) Mayor Alan Palmieri says that signing a confidentiality agreement with Norfolk Southern was the right thing to do. He doesn't regret it and says he would do it again. While some residents who have concerns about Norfolk Southern's plans for an intermodal facility fear that the agreement cloaks behind-doors dealings, Palmieri denies this is the case. "There have been no secret meetings and nobody with the county has signed anything with Norfolk Southern," he said, referring to agreements other than the pledge of confidentiality. Public officials routinely sign



confidentiality agreements with companies that are looking at moving into an area but don't want to alert competitors or real estate speculators, Palmieri said.

Norfolk Southern has announced that it wants to build a transfer operation in New Market where truck trailers and containers are on- and off-loaded from rail cars for long-distance shipping. The corporation seeks to build the \$60 million intermodal facility on 280 acres along Highway 11E between New Market Elementary School and Bruner Road. Two studies project that the Norfolk Southern facility would generate 1,801 jobs in Jefferson County by 2020 and 2,600 to 2,700 jobs by 2025. The project has created conflict between those who see it as a threat to farmland and quality of life in Jefferson County and those, including Palmieri, who see it as a lifeline to pull the local economy out of the depths of 15 percent unemployment.

**WASHINGTON** - The United States expects significant private investment in high-speed rail in coming years with firms from Europe and Asia – where bullet and other trains are prominent -- to factor heavily in its development, Reuters reports. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, speaking to policy experts and reporters recently, said rail would be a strong opportunity for outside participation with the Obama administration taking early steps financially and politically to advance new train corridors to compete with short-haul air and highway travel. "Companies involved in (overseas) high speed rail are in the U.S. right now," LaHood said, noting that several states are vying for a piece of an \$8 billion down payment in federal rail funding from February's economic stimulus package. "I think you'll see private investment in high speed rail -- from Europe and Asia, not just the U.S.," he said.

**JACKSONVILLE, FL** - The Board of Directors of CSX Corporation has approved a \$0.22 per share quarterly dividend on the company's common stock. The dividend is payable on September 15, 2009, to shareholders of record at the close of business on August 31, 2009. CSX Corporation, based in Jacksonville, FL, is a leading transportation company providing rail, intermodal and rail-to-truck transload services. The company's transportation network spans approximately 21,000 miles with service to 23 eastern states and the District of Columbia, and connects to more than 70 ocean, river and lake ports. More information about CSX Corporation and its subsidiaries is available at the Company's web site, [www.csx.com](http://www.csx.com).

**JACKSONVILLE, FL** - Public-private partnerships and their benefits to national infrastructure, the environment and homeland security took center stage in CSX Transportation's (CSXT) discussions with attendees at the 2009 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit in July in Philadelphia. CSXT sponsored a booth for the National Gateway initiative, a public-private partnership seeking to create a more efficient rail route linking Mid-Atlantic ports with Midwestern markets and to improve the flow of rail traffic between these regions through increased use of double-stack trains. "As America seeks to stimulate its economy, investment in transportation infrastructure is essential to prepare our nation for economic growth," said Tom Drake, Regional Vice President - State Government and Community Affairs, CSX Corporation. "CSXT is proud to work with both the private and public sector on the National Gateway, which will create jobs, ease congestion and reduce CO2 emissions." Private organizations have expressed strong support for the National Gateway, and CSX has committed to funding half of the over \$700 million dollars needed to complete the project. The project's coalition of supporters is seeking funding from state and federal government to secure the necessary funding to complete the clearance projects and intermodal terminals required to finish the project.

**CLEVELAND** - On July 31, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and CSX Transportation reached tentative agreement on a five-year contract that provides general wage increases of 16 percent and continues and improves the current bonus plan. If ratified, the on-property agreement would cover three CSX General Committees of Adjustment - CSX Eastern Lines, Western Lines and Northern Lines. The tentative proposal is a continuation of the Single System Agreement ratified in April of 2007. Contract information and ballots were mailed to more than 5,000 BLET members on August 5 and tabulation will begin on September 10.

**The three items above are from CSXT News Releases.**

## **VA Transportation Museum Saves “Lost Engines of Roanoke”**

**ROANOKE, VA** - For nearly sixty years, one-of-a-kind examples of cherished American steam locomotives from the early Twentieth Century have languished in a Roanoke scrap yard. Recently, the Virginia Museum of Transportation announced a partnership that will lead to the preservation of these locomotives and other rolling stock.

Originally faced with a cost of \$50,000 per piece to remove the rail stock, the partnership provides an arrangement to save not only the steam locomotives, but virtually all but one of the pieces of rail equipment now impounded at the old Virginia Scrap Iron & Metal Co. yard in Roanoke, VA.

“The Museum has been working to rescue these locomotives for nearly thirty years,” said Eugene M. Elliott, Jr., a long-time board member of the Museum. “We are grateful to our partners and the community that will allow us to bring these engines home, and save them for generations to come. Most of these pieces have a direct connection to Roanoke, and illustrate a story that should not be lost of the Valley’s hard-working railroad employees.”

The “Lost Engines of Roanoke” and other rail stock have been at the scrap yard since the 1950s. The yard was recently sold to make way for Carilion Clinic’s growing medical campus on South Jefferson Street, providing a window of opportunity to save these engines.

The steam locomotives in the Roanoke scrap yard are the very last surviving examples of two classes of Norfolk & Western heavy freight locomotives, the M2 and M2c classes. The Classes serve as an important example in the development of heavy freight locomotive technology in the pre-World War I era. Originally intended for heavy freight service, the Class M2s were soon displaced by larger engines and reassigned to local freight and switching duties. By 1950, they were among the oldest engines on the N&W roster and were designated as surplus to operations. All were sold for scrap, the last ones in 1957.

Home to two of the most powerful steam locomotives in existence today—the Class A #1218 and the Class J #611—the Virginia Museum of Transportation regularly attracts visitors of all ages from across the U.S. and 45 foreign countries. Through exhibits, artifacts, and an outstanding collection of rail equipment, cars, trucks, airplanes, and more, the Museum tells the rich story of Virginia’s transportation heritage. The Virginia Museum of Transportation is the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Official Transportation Museum located in the historic N&W Freight Station at 303 Norfolk Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24016. Open Monday-Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 1-5. The Museum’s website is at [www.vmt.org](http://www.vmt.org)

**From a News Release from the Virginia Museum of Transportation**

**Next Meeting of the *Watauga Valley NRHS*  
will be August 24 at 6:30 P.M.**

### *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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The Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter's *Moultrie* Diner (left) and the *Clinchfield* 500 coach were open to the public during the grand opening of the Bristol Train Station on the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Mike Tilley reported in last month's *Whistle Stop* that hundreds of people toured the Train Station and saw the Chapter's cars that were spotted on the engine tracks in the Norfolk Southern Yard. Photo by Mike Pierry, Jr., and is used with his permission.