

# Happy Holidays

## Whistle Stop



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Mike Jackson, Editor

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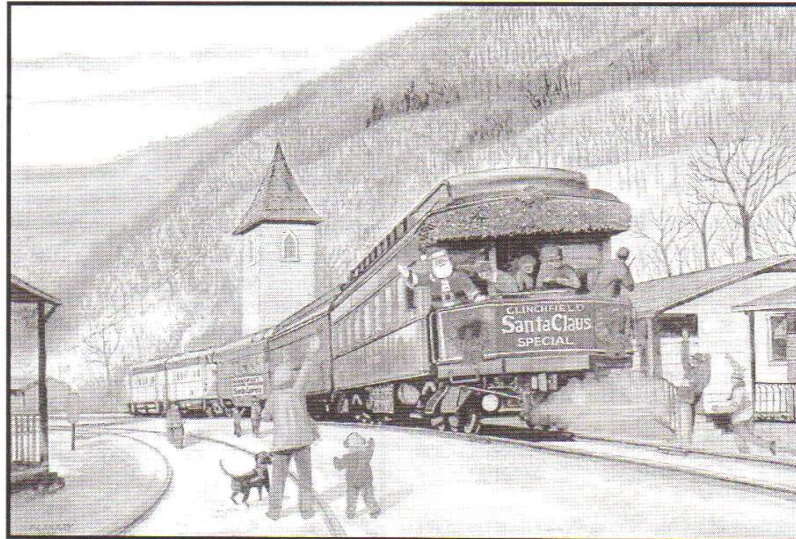
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**From a Past Issue of the *Whistle Stop*!**

## Whistle Stop

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Cover of the December 1997 *Whistle Stop* featuring a sketch of an early Clinchfield Railroad Santa Train passing through Dante, VA, with the steeple of the well-known and often-photographed Union Baptist Church in the background.

## *From the Watauga Valley NRHS President*

### **GENERAL NOTICES**

The December 5, 2009, Christmas Lunch will be the only gathering that the Chapter will have in December. We will not have a Board or General Membership meeting this month.

### **CHAPTER ELECTIONS**

55 ballots were received in the Chapter's election by the November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Mike Tilley (President), Bob Schubel (Vice President), Betty Jackson (Secretary), Duane Swank (Treasurer), Jim Pahrts (National Director), Gary Price (Historian), and current Board of Director's (BOD) members Art DeVoe and Bob Yapple each received 53 votes and will serve another term in office. BOD candidate Jeanne Cope received two write-in votes. Thanks to everyone who voted.

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

2009 has been a very busy year for the Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter members including our Great Smoky Mountain Spring Excursion, Hiwassee River Summer Excursion, and our very successful Autumn Train Excursions to Charlottesville, VA, and Asheville, NC. Do not forget all the other activities this year such as the Clinchfield South End Tour, all the Chapter work sessions on our equipment at the Spring Street Coach Yard, and a recent North End Tour on the Clinchfield which was the best yet.

As I have said often, "If it had not been for our dedicated Chapter members with your help and support, we could not have carried out these successful projects this year. There have been so many people this year that have taken time out of their busy schedule to offer their services on our many events. The Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS has been blessed well this year."

We have experienced joy and sadness this year. Many of our members have seen the passing of their loved ones and friends. Others have battled sickness and surgery. Yet through all these trials and tribulations, our Chapter is still strong; and, it's all because of our membership.

So, in conclusion, I want to wish you and your family and your friends a very happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year!

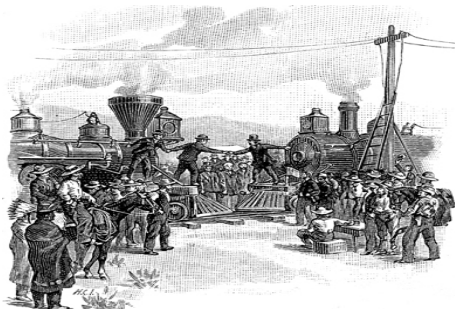
**Mike Tilley, President**



**Santa Train 2009 pops out of Caney Tunnel en-route to the next stop at Dante, VA. CSX Engine 8352, a GP40-2, is a former Clinchfield Railroad locomotive, according to Chapter President Mike Tilley. This photo taken by David Price can be seen at RailPictures.Net, and is used with his permission. Other photos by David can be seen at RailPictures.Net.**

# Happy Holidays from the Watauga Valley NRHS Officers and Board of Directors!

Mike Tilley, President  
Bob Schubel, Vice President  
Betty Jackson, Secretary  
Duane Swank, Treasurer  
Jim Pahriss, National Director  
Gary Price, Historian  
Board of Directors  
Bill Beagen  
Helen Calhoun  
Jim Calhoun  
Art DeVoe  
Mike Jackson  
Penny May  
Nick White  
Bob Yapple



*Our wish is for you and those close to you in  
your circle of family and friends to have a  
wonderful holiday season and a happy and  
prosperous new year!*

Used with permission from Karen J. Hatzigeorgiou at  
<http://karenswhimsy.com/train-clipart.shtm>



## DEAR SANTA

by *Del "Abe" Jones*

Dear Santa, I'm older, but I still believe in you  
At least, I believe in the things you always do.

Maybe, I can't ask for an electric  
train.

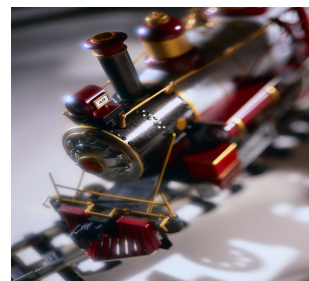
But, if you'd bring one of them, I won't complain.

But, what I really wish for is a special present--

Love that can't be "returned" once it has been  
sent.

So Santa, drop a little love under  
each Christmas tree

and, all will get a present of what Christmas is supposed to be.



And if there are no trees this year for the poor and the lonely when you get to their place, please give them love more abundantly!  
Used with Permission from The Holiday SpiritPlace.

### ***The North End Trip***

## **A Trip to the Northern Terminus of the Ol' Clinchfield Railroad**

**Story and Photos by Chapter member Paul Marcum**

This trip began on a beautiful morning, Saturday, November 14, 2009, leaving Johnson City at 7:00 am and arriving in Kingsport at 7:35 am.

President Mike Tilley and Vice President Bob Schubel led us to Gate City, VA, and onward to Speer's Ferry and the Copper Creek Trestle. About everyone had a camera, and the shutters were clicking on those cameras when a CSX unit coal train appeared topside on the main trestle, 167 feet in the air.

Then we headed east on Virginia Route 65, and our next stop was at a place called Hardwood Straights near Dungannon. This section of track is a tangent for two miles! More photos were taken here of another southbound CSX train. This was the last southbound mainline train for today.



We went through Saint Paul, VA, where CRR used to run along side of the N&W. Moving on, we went through Dante and across a mountain. When we descended the mountain, a stop was made to view the north portal of Sandy Ridge Tunnel in Trammel, VA. We were now in Dickenson County and deep into coal producing country.

A note here: There are many tunnels from Trammel to Elkhorn City, KY. I will not name them here so as to conserve space.

**Left Photo of the "Dispatcher" (Chapter member Paul Marcum) was taken by VP Bob Schubel.**

We continued on to Nora, Freemont, Clinchco and Haysi, VA. The Haysi RR used to have a diesel B-unit (#1). I believe it has been removed and renovated. The old Haysi RR now is an integral part of CSX.



Around noon, we stopped at the Breaks Interstate Park to rest and take in the view across the chasm toward the mainline of CSX near Stateline Tunnel. The view is terrific!

Our next stop was at a restaurant in Elkhorn City, KY, known as the Rusty Fork Café. The food was very good! Afterwards, we went across the Russell

Fork River to a railroad museum.

**Here she comes! Left, a CSX train  
crosses the Copper Creek Trestle!**

We were actually in former Chesapeake & Ohio RR country. Our folks viewed many items in and around the museum.

We had planned to go on to Shelby Yard (CSX), fourteen miles beyond, but by now it was getting toward late afternoon. So, after a fun-filled day, we headed home.



**Left, at Trammel, VA, looking  
southward**

## **Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple**

**GENERAL:** The clean-up at the Spring Street Coach Yard continues.

**ROLLING STOCK:** The *Powhatan Arrow* 539 has been winterized after returning from the Roanoke Chapter's excursion.

**CRESCENT HARBOR:** Paint removal—chipping—is moving along. Most of the lounge has been completed and work on the passageway is in progress. Paint stripping of the stainless trim is also progressing. Rework of the main air handler has been completed, and it is much quieter now. Wiring work continues with work on controls, marker lights, and call button circuits in progress. Finishing touches are being done on the fixtures and conduit for the 27-pin and HEP systems.

**THANK YOU:** Thanks to everyone who has joined us and worked at the Yard this year, and I want to wish everyone a happy holiday and a prosperous new year!

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

## **Rail News Contributed by Jeff Jones**

**BLUEFIELD, WV**—A lot has changed during the past 12 years since the last Amtrak excursion train rolled into Bluefield from Roanoke, Va., but then as now, the trip took place under the watchful supervision of Norfolk Southern Railway personnel from the locomotive engineers in the train, to the NS Pocahontas Division safety committee personnel beside the train to assist passengers, to the division superintendent watching over everything. "We're trying this through the entire system," Gary Shepard, Pocahontas Division superintendent said with a steady eye poised on the East End of Bluefield's busy railroad yard. The coalfields of southern West Virginia and southwestern Virginia are filled with metallurgical or steel-making coal, and while the number of trains carrying merchandise or general freight, through Bluefield has been stagnant due to the lingering effects of the languishing U.S. economy, the export coal business is enjoying a sharp rebound.

"We moved 18 eastbound trains through Bluefield between 7 p.m. (Friday) night and (Saturday) morning at 7 a.m.," Shepard said. Several NS locomotives were parked in a line beside the Amtrak excursion train, but as soon as the passengers were out of their cars and

headed up the ramp to Princeton Avenue, another fully-loaded eastbound coal train was on the move. "It would be nice to have more of these rail excursions, but it would be even nicer to have regular rail service from Southwest Virginia to Washington, D.C.," Connie Stanley said as she and her husband Mike were preparing to board the excursion train for the ride back to Roanoke. NS Pocahontas Division personnel came out and watched passengers arrive and depart.

**JACKSONVILLE, FL** –CSX Corporation has been named Number Two in the G.I. Jobs 2010 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers rankings. The seventh-annual list recognizes employers that have shown a dedicated track record of hiring military personnel, as well as supportive corporate policies toward National Guard and reserve service members. "CSX is proud to be an employer of choice for military personnel," said CSX Chairman, President and CEO Michael Ward. "Veterans have a foundation of discipline and a focus on safety that serves them well in demanding occupations like railroading." G.I. Jobs has included CSX on its annual list of the nation's top military friendly employers since 2006. CSX actively recruits military personnel for jobs in all departments. Currently more than 6,700 CSX employees have prior military service, including nearly 30% of all newly hired personnel in 2009. CSX has a multi-faceted approach to military recruiting with a focus on building relationships. **From CSX News**



Under the watchful eyes of several CSX employees, the 2009 CSX Santa Train passes through the large crowd of people at Fort Blackmore, VA. This photo by Doyle Massey is used with his permission and can be seen at [RailPictures.Net](http://RailPictures.Net) along with other pictures he has taken.

### **Christmas Quotes**

**"The only real blind person at Christmas-time is he who has not Christmas in his heart."**

**Helen Keller**

**"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."**

**Charles Dickens**

***Remember: No December Chapter Meeting;***

***The Next Watauga Valley NRHS Meeting will be January 25!  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Whistle Stop!***