

Whistle Stop



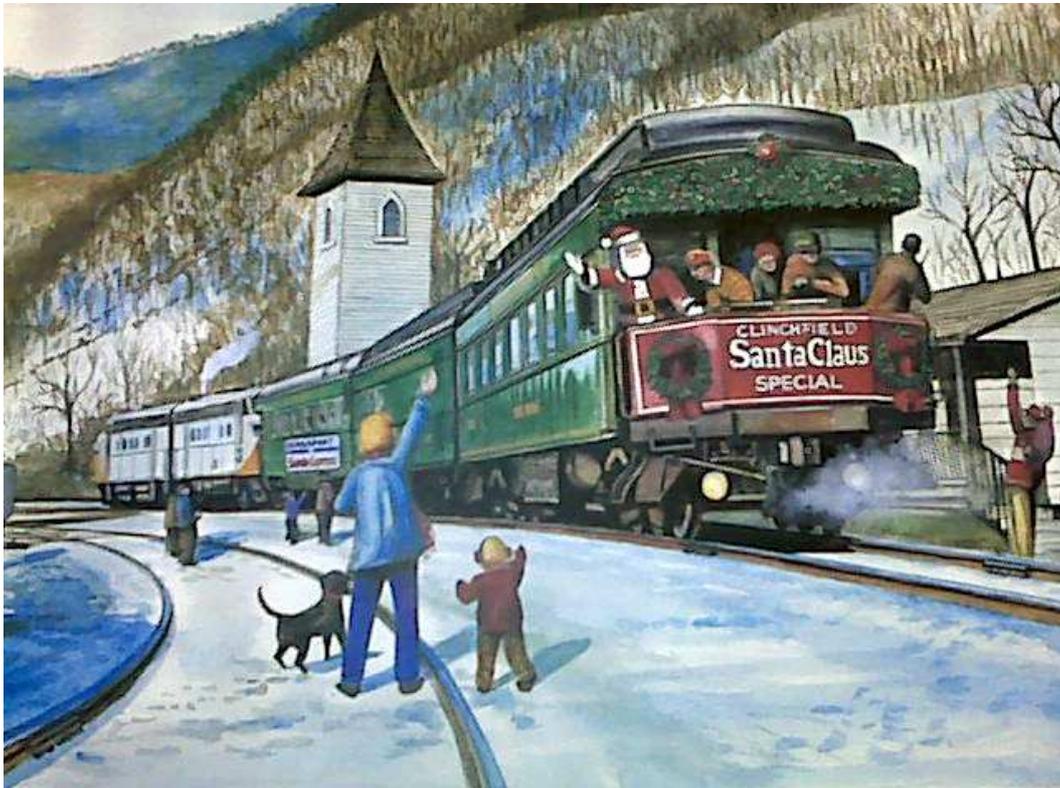
Watauga Valley NRHS
P O Box 432 Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleynrhs.org



Railroading – Past, Present and Future

Volume 30 No. 12

December 2010



In this wintry Southern Appalachian scene from days past, the artist portrays CLINCHFIELD's F units pulling its annual (now CSX) Santa Claus Train. The Great Man himself can be seen dispersing toys and candy to area children along the tracks from the rear platform. The locale, popular with photographers, is Dante, VA. Prints of this picture, which has graced past issues of Whistle Stop but published here in color for the first time, are for sale by the Kingsport, TN Chamber of Commerce. All proceeds go to the Santa Train Scholarship Fund, which annually awards a \$5000 scholarship to a deserving local student. To order prints, go to <http://tinyurl.com/2fqbdx8> or call the Chamber at (423) 392-8800. [Picture reproduced with permission.]

Member Notes

by Nancy Jewell

Sympathy is extended to the Kenneth Kerns Family in the death of Agnes Kerns on November 14, 2010. Ken is a charter member of Watauga Valley Chapter and was a regular worker at the Jonesborough Yard in the 1980's and '90's. Agnes joined the chapter in 1983 and very often sent her homemade cookies with Ken to share with his fellow yard workers. Thanks, Agnes and Ken.

There are several friends, family and members we need to keep in our thoughts as they deal with health concerns: Charlotte Brown, Walter Byrd, Jeanne Cope, Jane DeVoe, Coy Edwards, George Ritchie, Farrell Snyder, and Doug Zimmerman. As always, please let us know of anyone to whom a phone call or a card in the mail would make their day a bit better. Call the Chapter phone (423) 753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918 to help us keep in touch.

The annual "Christmas Dinner" held on December 4th [see photos below from Nick White] was enjoyed by a good number of members and guests. The committee, led by Helen Calhoun, did such a great job with seasonal decorations and food organization that a good time was had by all -- folks from Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina.



George &
Nancy
Ritchie;
Jim
Calhoun



Helen
Calhoun
and
Penny
May



(Left to
right) Lois
Tilley;
Helen
Calhoun;
Sarah
Gibson;
Penny
May;
Frank
Rohrer



The
Gang

As this year draws to a close, may I add a personal note sending warmest wishes for a happy holiday and a wonderful New Year.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple



As a treat and diversion from the usual discussion of valves, brake discs, generators and the like, we offer the following photo in the spirit of this holiday season.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bush were married at Mill Spring Park in Jonesborough, Tennessee's oldest town, on September 11, 2010. The reception was held at the Wedding Loft in town. The attached photograph of the happy couple was taken aboard the Chapter's car "Moultrie" at the

Spring Street Coach Yard for their wedding album. The Chapter offers its best wishes to the couple.

NO DECEMBER MEETING

Due to the holidays, there will not be a December Chapter Meeting. We wish you and yours the merriest of Christmases and a very happy and prosperous New Year. We'll see you at the January 2011 meeting!

2011 Election Results

Officers

President: Mike E. Tilley
 Vice President: Bob Schubel
 Secretary: Harold Smmitter
 Treasurer: Jeanie Walker
 National Director: Robert W. Yaple
 Historian: Gary Price

Board of Directors

Helen Calhoun
 Jim Calhoun
 Art Devoe
 Penny May
 Nick White
 Randy Moore

Appointees

Jim Magill, Chief Mechanical Officer
 Bob Yaple, Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer
 Fred Waskiewicz, Newsletter Editor
 Fred Waskiewicz, Webmaster
 Mike Tilley, Trip Director
 David Denny, Chapter Attorney

Nancy Jewell, Membership Notes
 Suzie Price, Membership Chairman
 Jack Maloney, Spring Street Yard
 Maintenance
 Nick White, Membership Recruitment and
 Publicity
 Harold Smmitter, Librarian

Treasure in a Box

by Gary Price

I originally had planned an article on my trips to PA, but it is going to be a large article with several photos to support it. With voting, the holidays and our AMTRAK excursion to report on, I decided to tone this month's submission down and save "*The Steel City*" for January. So stay tuned. It will be one of my best. But for now ...

Sometimes it takes years for a person to find a rare treasure, and sometimes they just find you. Some treasures may come in a fancy box lined with gold or jewels, but my treasure came to me in the form of an old dusty shoebox. A fellow employee approached me with an old shoebox of photographs that he had found while re-modeling a house. He said that they were all train photos; that the owner of the house had died; he had no interest in them; and that he would sell them to me if I wanted them. I cracked the lid, saw some of the photos scattered around, and quickly offered him \$100 bucks for the entire box, which he gladly accepted. He thought I was insane, but after sorting through the 300 photos of 1957-1960 railroading, I was certain that I had found the ultimate deal.

Being a die hard NORFOLK AND WESTERN fan, I was thrilled to find that a majority of the vintage photos of different sizes were shot along the Pocahontas Division of the N&W between 1957 and 1960. Included in the color shots are many photos of the 1957 NRHS convention stop at Bluefield, West Virginia. Color shots of A's, Y6b's and early diesels



were exciting to see, but what caught my attention were shots of J class locomotives dead in tow and on their way to the scrap yard. Also included in the N&W photos are black and white shots of the 611 in 1959 on her last run before retirement. The crown jewel of them all is a color shot of the 611 in the scrap line at Bluefield with a sister J [left]. As we all know, she was saved from the torch, returned to Roanoke, preserved, and restored, only to be retired again. She now sits quietly at the VMT in Roanoke. [Continued on next page.]



Y6b 2188 has just been coaled, watered, and sits in the ready line while new diesels wait to take over the railroad.



Could this possibly be world famous railroad photographer O. Winston Link?

Also represented in black and white are many photos of the early days of operation on CASS SCENIC RAILROAD, UNION RAILROAD, TWEETSIE RAILROAD, and several photos of trains I am still trying to identify. As space permits, I will send various photos throughout 2011 to our editor for inclusion each month in the Whistle Stop. You just never know where a railroad treasure might be found ... or find you.

Next month: "The Steel City"

In the News

The *Johnson City Press* reports that the purchase of the ex-ET&WNC rail corridor to Elizabethton by the city should be completed by the end of January. The decision to remove rail has not been made yet. Currently, the rail at grade crossings in Elizabethton is being removed. That job will be completed by the end of this year.

Free-agent football safety Keith Fitzhugh turned down an offer to join the New York Jets to remain a conductor with NORFOLK SOUTHERN. He chose a rail career over football to stay on track financially while helping support his parents in Atlanta.



Photo Section



As a Christmas gift from Whistle Stop, this month's *Photo Section* offers pages of photos portraying scenes from our recent, very successful excursions.



Don Findley captured the Chapter's coach Powhatan Arrow 539 at twilight in Greensboro, NC. This haunting image evokes memories of holiday travel as it once was.



Photos by Don Findley and Fred Waskiewicz



Photos by Don Findley and Fred Waskiewicz

Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society

P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432

wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

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. Permission to reprint Whistle Stop articles with the exception of photographs is granted if proper credit is given. Reuse of photographs must receive permission by this Chapter or the photographer.

Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS

P.O. Box 432

Johnson City, TN 37605-0432

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL