

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS  
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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*The Crescent Harbor ready for excursion service.*

## *October 24<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting*

The October Watauga Valley RSHM meeting will be our Autumn Train Safety and Car Host Training Meeting **Monday, October 24, 2011** at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library 100 West Millard St. Johnson City, TN. It is very important that everyone that works the train attends this meeting as we will go over very detailed information about the trips. Also Amtrak requires everyone to go over the Safety rules as workers on the train. **EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT WORKING THE TRAIN, YOU ARE WELCOME TO SIT IN ON THE MEETING.** I look forward to seeing everyone at this very important meeting. I know many of you live a couple of hours away and I plan on getting everyone out of the meeting ASAP so you can get home at decent hour. If there is any problem with your attendance, please e-mail me back so we can line you up for a make up session this week. I appreciate your willingness to work the trips and look forward seeing everyone. Tickets are about sold out.

Thanks,  
Mike Tilley, President

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## *Member Notes*

by Nancy Jewell

The Fall season brings many changes to the trees -- beautiful leaf colors, to the climate -- warm to chilly, to the clocks -- daylight savings time to standard time, and so on.

Changes also come each day to our members, friends, and families. Many of these events are good and some not-so-good. PLEASE let us know, at any time, that a card or call to any of these folks would be appropriate. The Chapter phone is (423) 753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918. Thanks for helping us keep in touch.

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

by Bob Yaple

### *Rolling Stock*

The yard looks very empty after a lot of checking, cleaning, last minute fix-up and due to the passenger cars gone off to Huntington and Spencer. With the yard completely empty, we get a break. Wait! The red caboose.

### *Crescent Harbor*

The big push was on to get the car acceptable for its maiden voyage to Spencer for the Fall Excursion. There's lots of work to do yet - another year's worth - but what is done looks terrific. The car runs great and has passed all the required inspections. It has taken a lot of effort by a lot of people for this to happen and the mechanical crew is certainly grateful.

## *Chapter Notices*

We still need programs for our General Membership meetings. If you have any programs, including railroad slides, a video, a DVD, or know a possible speaker, see Nick White, the Program Director at the November meeting or call the chapter phone (423) 753-5797 or e-mail [wataugavalley@embarqmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embarqmail.com)

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## *CHUCKEY DEPOT REPORT*

The Chuckey Depot has been removed from its site in Chuckey TN. The station is in four trailers in Jonesborough. The station will be put back up on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Jonesborough along the railroad. Plans are to start putting it back together in January which will take 6 months to complete, just in time for summer.

## *"Blue Ribbon Special"*

by Gary Price

If I had to describe the year 2011 so far, I would have to say, it has been an amazing experience with all of the NORFOLK SOUTHERN events that I have been invited to participate in so far. From shop tours to attending the Harriman Awards, this year has been a railfan's dream come true, and the latest honor bestowed upon me was a real treat. A chance to be on THE BIG RED TRAIN!

A letter dated September 9, 2011 arrived in my mailbox with a special invitation to a dinner in Roanoke onboard the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Office Car Special. Company officials came up with a plan to use the NS OCS train on September 28-30, 2011 for a one of a kind, three-day employee special across a portion of the system. Around 60 employees rode each leg of the trip across the right away of their respective territories, and 60 different employees had special invitations to partake in an executive meal each evening in the dining car. Each employee had to be nominated by an official to be qualified to be included in this special event.

On September 28, 2011 the *"Blue Ribbon Special"* departed Atlanta, Georgia with all four NS F-units and 14 Tuscan red cars and made its way northward to Gainesville, Georgia. After a brief stop to swap out passengers, the OCS continued on to Greenville, SC. Once again employees were swapped out and the train left out for the destination for the day: Linwood, NC. Later that night, a dinner was held onboard for employees from the Piedmont Division.

On September 29, 2011, the *"Blue Ribbon Special"* departed Linwood, and carried the first batch of employees to Danville, VA. After a brief stop, the train left Danville for Hurt, VA where it switched over from the Old SOUTHERN mainline to the Old NORFOLK AND WESTERN mainline for the journey into Roanoke. Now, my invitation was for the dinner only on this leg of the run and since the train was to be spotted beside of the O. Winston Link Museum, I decided to travel to Roanoke early and visit my friends at both the OWLM and the VMT. My invitation had me scheduled to be there at 5:30 p.m. but I arrived at the train an hour early, and I am glad that I did! I arrived about the same time as the staff members and they gave me a special tour of several of the cars that I have never had the opportunity to be in before.



At 5:30, the NS company photographer gathered all of us together for a group photo beside of the "Delaware", NORFOLK SOUTHERNs only full length dome car. After that we were asked to board the train and find a seat in the Buena Vista. Most every railfan out there is familiar with this unique observation car with its large glass rear window. I was lucky enough to be seated in one of the 28 theatre seats facing the rear. We had an hour long power point program hosted by several of NS executives in a "State of the Railroad" type format. The only thing that could have made this part better was if the train was in motion; however, several trains passed us on the mainline, giving us a brief feeling like we were moving.

After the power point presentation, we [continued on next page]

were escorted to the dining car "Kentucky" for a formal meal cooked by the NS Executive Chef and Staff. First arrived a shrimp cocktail salad and rolls, followed by a main-course pork chop, mashed potatoes and vegetables. Finally, dessert was served in the form of a slice of hot apple pie with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

As the evening came to a close, and we were being dismissed to go home, the NS Social Media Staff was on hand to present each one of us a commemorative coin featuring a F-unit and a booklet celebrating the *"Blue Ribbon Special"*. To my surprise, they handed all of us a large NORFOLK AND WESTERN patch to commemorate the heritage of Roanoke and the Virginia Division.

On September 30, 2011. the *"Blue Ribbon Special"* departed Roanoke on the final leg of the journey, and what most claim to be the most spectacular views of the entire trip - the journey to Bluefield, WV. After a short layover there, the train headed deeper into the mountainous terrain to its final destination of Williamson, WV. That night, there was a dinner onboard to celebrate the employees of the roughest and toughest division that NS has to offer - the famous Pocahontas Division.

I sure do hope that NS views the *"Blue Ribbon Special"* as a success. If so, maybe they will make this a yearly event, and maybe ... just maybe ... the next time, I will get to ride it myself.



***NS-7 PENNSYLVANIA***

**The *"Blue Ribbon Special"*  
consist**

NS F9A-4270  
 NS F7-4276  
 NS F7-4275  
 NS F9A 4271  
 NS-39 POWER CAR  
 NS-7 PENNSYLVANIA-office car  
 NS-5 MARYLAND-office car  
 NS-20 OHIO-office car  
 NS-9 ALABAMA-sleeper  
 NS-12 INDIANA-sleeper  
 NS-11 ILLINOIS-sleeper  
 NS-13 GEORGIA-sleeper  
 NS-2 CAROLINA-sleeper  
 NS-21 WEST VIRGINIA-lounge  
 NS-1 VIRGINIA-office car  
 NS-19 KENTUCKY-diner  
 NS-24 DELAWARE-full length dome  
 NS-23 BUENA VISTA-theater car

## *Special Report: The Crescent Harbor*

*NINE YEARS – 2 MONTHS – 3 DAYS – WE DID IT!*

by Mike Tilley

On February 2, 2002, Jim Magill, Dan Freeman, and Mike Tilley traveled to Plymouth, FL and inspected SOUTHERN RAILWAY lounge / sleeper *Crescent Harbor*. We were very happy with what we saw during our inspection of the car. After going back and forth with the owner, we struck a deal to purchase the car in April, 2002. With the *Crescent Harbor* sitting on a siding in Florida for 13 years, there was a lot of work to get it on the way to its new home. The air brakes failed the first test and we had to replace the air tank, having to get one from Ringling Bros. Circus fleet outside of Tampa. After several months, the car was prepared to head north. Mike Tilley worked with FLORIDA CENTRAL RAILROAD to interchange it with CSX in Orlando which brought the car to Johnson City. The EAST TENNESSEE RAILWAY then delivered the *Crescent Harbor* to the NORFOLK SOUTHERN, which in turn delivered the car to our Spring St. Coach Yard in Jonesborough on August 17, 2002.

The car was a major restoration project for 9 years, but it was not put on the rush list to finish until the last 2 – 3 years. The car was built from the ground up, including major structural work, new wiring, an all new electrical system, including heating, A/C lighting and many other systems throughout the car. The interior was restored from one end to the other with new upholstery, carpet and painting.

The interesting thing about the *Crescent Harbor* is that most cars have gone to rebuilding shops to have most of the work done to get the car on the road. The Watauga Valley RSHM did all the work at their siding in Jonesborough TN. This is indeed something to be proud of!

On October 19, 2011, at 7:20 pm, the *Crescent Harbor* was pulled from the Spring St. siding in Jonesborough for its first trip via freight to Spencer NC. It will be put on the Watauga Valley / NCTM excursion train. This will be the first time the *Crescent Harbor* has been on passenger train service in 32 years. The car's last trip was in 1979 on the *Southern Crescent* from Washington DC to Atlanta, GA on SOUTHERN's mainline. The *Crescent Harbor* will return to where it ended revenue service on the Washington DC to Atlanta, GA mainline again on October 29. On that date it will roll again in its beautiful SOUTHERN RAILWAY livery on our trips.

We appreciate the many Chapter members who have contributed to the car's restoration work over the years. You should take great pride in your achievement of getting this beautiful car back on the road after an absence of 32 years. Your many hours of hard work will be paid off when the *Crescent Harbor* returns to the rails on which she once served.



# *Photo Section*



The following collage features interior and exterior shots of the Crescent Harbor.





A happy work crew grinning broadly, knowing their hard work has paid off with the *Crescent Harbor* ready to hit the rails once again! Pictured are: Lois Tilley; Jim Magill; Mike Tilley; Art Devoe; Dan Freeman; Helen & Jim Calhoun; Jack Maloney; Bob Yapple; and Don Findley.

### *In the News: CSX Leads Railroads in Newsweek Green Rankings*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – October 19, 2011 – CSX Corporation announced that the company ranked first among Class I freight railroads in the Newsweek Green Rankings, released today. CSX has consistently placed first among all Class I railroads in these rankings since the awards launched in 2009. Newsweek’s Green Rankings are based on four criteria: green score, environmental impact, environmental management and disclosure. Disclosure is a new category added this year to measure company transparency and reporting measures.

“Environmental sustainability has been and will continue to be one of CSX’s top priorities,” said Michael J. Ward, CSX chairman, president and chief executive officer. “We provide efficient and sustainable transportation that delivers benefits for our customers and neighboring communities while preserving the environment.”

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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