

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Photographer Abram Burnett captured eastbound train #46 (as listed on the N&W timetable) at Glade Spring, VA as 1964 was drawing to a close. At point leading the charge is SOUTHERN's EMD E7A #2910. (Beginning in 1957, SOU ran trains between Monroe and Bristol without changing over to N&W steam.)

## *February 25<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

This month's General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will be held at 6:30 pm on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program will be presented by Richard Baker, with the LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD passenger and freight service as its topic. This will be a program you do not want to miss. Bring a friend and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Please note that all car hosts working the May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> excursions must attend this meeting for further information on their excursion duties.

## *Member Notes*

By Nancy Jewell

Please keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with health concerns: Jane DeVoe, the George Ritchie family, and Bob Yapple.

As always, let us know of any members, families or friends to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is 423-753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Thanks for helping us keep in touch.

## *DUES RENEWAL NOTICES*

If you have not paid your dues, please get them paid up ASAP, your membership in the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum expired December 31, 2012. Please get your dues paid up before the membership Chairman sends out the Late Dues Notices.

## *MEETING CANCELEATION NOTICES*

If it snows on the night of the General Membership meeting and roads are questionable, please call the WATV office at 423-753-5797 for information whether or not the meeting will be cancelled.

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

By Bob Yapple

**GENERAL.** The weather has not been kind to the Mechanical Crew. It, coupled with illness, has definitely curtained our activity. We have purchased and put into operation a gas powered pressure washer. This will help us keep the cars cleaner and our work place more desirable.

**POWHATAN ARROW COACH.** We have completed winterizing the water system. Like all passenger cars, it will still have to drained and protected during parked periods. A Freon leak in one of the A/C systems that has been undetected for a long time has been found and repaired. It was a blown head gasket on a compressor.

**CLINCHFIELD COACH.** Several wear and tear items have been repaired. We also found a water pump leak in the Genset. Our former supplier for Perkins engines has become unreliable and we are happy to find a local parts source. It seems that these engines are used in several models of farm tractors.

**CRESCENT HARBOR SLEEPER/LOUNGE.** The heavy January rains revealed a leak in the roof that we were not aware of. Water from the leak had previously been contained above the ceiling panels. Remodeling of the Genset mountain frame has been completed. We will complete operational systems prior to re-installing the genset under the car.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT SPRING STREET COACH YARD.**

The Mechanical Crew needs volunteers at the Spring Street Coach Yard in Jonesborough on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please show up or phone the Crew at 423-753-5797 to let them know you're coming.



## Spring Rail Excursions

The North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum have partnered to sponsor two great rail excursions this Spring. Trains will travel to Washington, D.C. and Charleston, S.C. for 3 day / 2 night trips that will be unforgettable!

**April 26-28, 2013**

Following two sell-out trips to our nation's capital last year, we had to offer this trip again in 2013! This time, we have added an additional day of sightseeing and more options for passengers.

**Tickets will sell fast, so act now!**

### The Capital City Special

#### Trip Overview

The "Capital City Special" is a 3-day/2-night scenic excursion from the Piedmont of North Carolina to Washington, DC aboard vintage rail cars, the Clinchfield and Powhatan Arrow. Following a picturesque journey by rail, our travelers will arrive in Alexandria, VA, just outside of the nation's capital.

Following a short stop at the hotel, motorcoaches will provide transportation into historic Old Town Alexandria for dinner. Passengers will then enjoy an exciting evening of sightseeing – exploring some of our country's most breathtaking monuments by moonlight!

Saturday morning begins with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to our country's fallen heroes and witness the changing of the Guard. Our passengers will then travel to the heart of DC, where you will have most of the afternoon on your own to explore the 10 Smithsonian Museums along the National Mall, as well as the Newseum, National Gallery of Art or the National Archives & Records Administration. Dinner will be on your own in old Town Alexandria, followed by a relaxing evening cruise on the Potomac River.

On Sunday morning, passengers will stroll through Old Town Alexandria, once home to George Washington and Robert E. Lee. Tour guides will provide entertaining stories as they share the town's rich history. Passengers will depart from the Alexandria Amtrak Station later in the morning for the return trip home.

Tickets include the round trip ride to Alexandria, VA, motorcoach transportation, hotel accommodations, tours of monuments, Arlington Cemetery, and Old Town Alexandria, as well as Potomac River cruise.

Most of the museums on the National Mall are free; however, museum admission (if applicable) is not included in ticket purchase. No meals are included; however, optional box lunches can be purchased in advance for Friday or Sunday.

#### Tickets

##### All Tickets Are Deluxe Coach Class, Aboard the *Clinchfield* or the *Powhatan Arrow*

Amenities include comfort seating. Access to the Amtrak cafe car, optional box lunch available for an additional charge. All tickets include the round trip train ride to Alexandria, Va., motorcoach tours and transportation to and from the hotel.

##### General Public

\$550/person Single Occupancy      \$425/person Double Occupancy

##### Special rates for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society

\$525/person Single Occupancy      \$400/person Double Occupancy

**Powhatan Arrow**



**Clinchfield**



No refunds except in case of medical emergency (physician's note required). All refunds subject to a \$50 processing fee per ticket will be limited to 10 days following the date of the trip. We reserve the right to cancel trips if the minimum capacity requirements are not met.

**TICKETS ARE ON SALE BY PHONE ONLY: Please call 704-636-2889 ext. 237.**

## May 17-19, 2013

Charleston is brimming with history, culture and charm. Join us for a 3-day weekend getaway to enjoy a sampling of what the Lowcountry has to offer.

### The Lowcountry Limited Trip Overview

Consisting of both vintage parlor and passenger cars as well as modern Amfleet cars, a specially chartered train leaves the N.C. Transportation Museum on Friday morning for a scenic ride through the Piedmont of both North and South Carolina before heading to the coast. Upon arrival at the Norfolk Southern railyard in North Charleston, motorcoaches will provide transportation to the hotels before heading into Downtown Charleston for dinner on their own at one of Charleston's remarkable restaurants.

On Saturday, passengers can embark on one of two different sightseeing tours for an additional fee or opt to explore historic Downtown Charleston on your own. Tour options include:

- A. Charleston Sampler – Tour of Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, Fort Sumter and USS Yorktown; includes a box lunch. Cost is \$65/person.
- B. Land & Sea Tour – 2-hour guided stroll through the heart of Downtown Charleston and a 90-minute guided harbor cruise; Time on your own in the afternoon; Lunch not included. Cost is \$40/person.
- C. On Your Own – Spend the day exploring beautiful downtown Charleston. Complimentary transportation is provided from the hotel in the morning to the Custom's House/Old Town Market. Charleston also has a free trolley service that runs within the downtown area.

Saturday evening, motorcoaches will provide continuous service from the hotels to Downtown Charleston from 6pm until 10pm, so passengers can once again enjoy a fun evening and dinner on their own.

Passengers will board the train Sunday morning for an enjoyable train ride back to North Carolina.

Tickets include the round trip ride to Charleston, SC, motorcoach transportation, hotel accommodations and hot continental breakfast meals on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Tour options and box lunches must be purchased in advance.

### Ticket Options and Amenities

<b>Premium First Class</b>	<b>Deluxe Coach</b>
<b>Amenities include:</b>	<b>Amenities include:</b>
Lounge seating aboard restored, vintage rail cars.	Comfortable, adjustable seating aboard vintage
Meals are provided in a vintage dining car.	passenger cars and modern Amfleet cars.
Friday - Breakfast and lunch (included with ticket purchase).	Optional box lunch - must be ordered prior
Sunday - Lunch (included with your ticket purchase).	to the trip at additional cost.
Snacks and drinks (water, coffee, soft drinks) provided.	Snacks and drinks (water, coffee, soft drinks) provided.
<b>General Public:</b>	<b>General Public:</b>
\$775/person Single Occupancy	\$675/person Single Occupancy
\$675/person Double Occupancy	\$575/person Double Occupancy
<b>Special Rates:</b>	<b>Special Rates:</b>
<i>Only for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum</i>	<i>Only for members of the N.C. Transportation Museum</i>
<i>and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society:</i>	<i>and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society:</i>
\$750/person Single Occupancy	\$650/person Single Occupancy
\$650/person Double Occupancy	\$550/person Double Occupancy

No refunds except in case of medical emergency (physician's note required).

All refunds subject to a \$50 processing fee per ticket will be limited to 10 days following the date of the trip.

We reserve the right to cancel trips if the minimum capacity requirements are not met.

**TICKETS ARE ON SALE BY PHONE ONLY: Please call 704-636-2889 ext. 237.**

## *In the News*



### *21st Century Steam Excursion Trips Planned for 2013*

[NS PRESS RELEASE] The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum (TVRM) and the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society (FWRHS), in partnership with Norfolk Southern Corporation, will host 21st Century Steam excursion trips in Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in the Spring of 2013. Schedules, prices, and ticketing information are available at [www.tvrail.com](http://www.tvrail.com) for TVRM-hosted trips and [fortwaynerailroad.org](http://fortwaynerailroad.org) for FWRHS-sponsored trips. Norfolk Southern employees will be able to request tickets for the employee appreciation trips soon through the company. The scheduled trips include:

- March 9: Bristol, VA to Radford, VA. Steam locomotive SOU #630.
- March 10: Bristol, VA to Bulls Gap, TN. Steam locomotive SOU #630.
- March 16: Roanoke to Radford, VA (morning), and Roanoke to Lynchburg, VA (afternoon). Steam locomotive SOU #630. (Combination public and NS employee appreciation trips.)
- April 13: Spencer, NC to Barber, NC. Steam locomotive SOU #630. (Combination public and NS employee appreciation trip.)
- April 20 and 21: Asheville to Old Fort, NC. Steam locomotive SOU #630. (April 20 is combination public and NS employee appreciation trip.)
- May 12: Rocky River, OH to Bellevue, OH. Steam locomotive NKP #765.
- May 25, 26 and 27: Lewistown, PA to Horseshoe Curve, PA. Steam locomotive NKP #765.



### *March NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Excursions Sold Out!*

Our March 9<sup>th</sup> Bristol, VA – Radford, VA and March 10<sup>th</sup> Bristol, VA to Bulls Gap, TN excursions sold out overnight! An overview of those trips can be found on our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org/excursions.php>.



### *DVD of November Excursion Available*

As promised, a DVD presenting highlights of last November's "Georgia Autumn Special" excursion is now available on eBay. To locate its listing, you can search by using the "Georgia Autumn Special DVD" search keywords, or you can go to the seller page for user "rrchas2", located at <http://tinyurl.com/abc87fs>. The price is \$19.99, which includes free shipping.



**Steam Into History, Inc** plans to operate a steam engine and passenger train on the Northern Central Railroad in 2013 in York County, PA! The engine, a Civil War era replica, will be in operation in time to mark the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. One of the events recreated aboard this rolling museum will be Abraham Lincoln's rail journey to deliver his Gettysburg Address. History will be enhanced through the use of re-enactors, on the train or along the route: perhaps Lincoln as a passenger and soldiers vying for control of bridges and tracks. For more information, go to [www.steamintohistory.com](http://www.steamintohistory.com).



**RHA Recognized as a Non-Profit.** As of December 20, 2012, the Railroad Heritage Alliance, of which we are a member, has been granted 501 (c) (3) status. This certification by the IRS officially recognizes the RHA as a not-for-profit organization.

## *In the News (continued)*



**ET&WNC Restoration.** Matt Bumgarner of the Alexander (NC) NRHS Chapter posted on the “Tweetsie” online discussion board (Yahoo! Group) the following progress report on ongoing ET&WNC-related restoration activities at the Southeast Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC.

- ET&WNC #434: We have purchased trucks and couplers for this old gal and hope to have her on the rails soon at her new home at the museum.
- ET&WNC #2: This standard gauge car was fired up after being mechanically overhauled and hauled passengers along the Craggy Mountain Line in Asheville on at least three occasions this past December. She got an entirely new tongue & groove roof and should receive a new coat of paint shortly.
- ET&WNC #1: This car is being entirely restored, bolt by bolt, and reconfigured to her original setup as a narrow gauge car. The flathead motor is being entirely shopped and nearly every bearing the transmission, Hobbs reversing box, and rear end has been replaced. It is our goal to have this car ready by the Aug/ Sept timeframe and be available for operations this year.

To learn more about this museum, go to <http://www.newtondepot.com/>.



### **VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY RESURRECT TOURIST TRAIN AUTHORITY. [Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Jan. 28]**

Despite all the hurdles ahead, Tom Childress [from Historic Pocahontas Inc.] still believes that a two-state tourist train linking the Town of Pocahontas with Bramwell and other communities in the Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia coalfields would provide a boost to the local economy that could bring a halt the region’s prolonged economic slide.

While Childress supports the [Spearhead ATV Trail system](#), he also believes that a tourist train in these communities is the only thing that can bring the kind of economic development that will turn things around for this part of Tazewell County and for the communities in Southern West Virginia.

The tourist train concept has been batted around for about 25 years, but without a financial backer coming forward; the few miles of Norfolk Southern track between Pocahontas and Bramwell remain rust covered. In the 1980s, when the late Reginald Sexton championed the tourist railroad cause, people in the know reported that an operational steam locomotive would cost in the neighborhood of \$1 million, with thousands of dollars more for maintenance and even more thousands of dollars for operations and maintenance staff.

After Norfolk Southern ended its steam program in 1994, the tourist train dreamers of the Pocahontas Coalfields never quit working on the concept of steam locomotives pulling passenger cars from Pocahontas through Bramwell and on to Montcalm, Matoaka, and beyond, if possible. Tourist train activists in both Virginia and West Virginia lobbied their respective state legislatures, and gained traction when a pair of powerful former governors, Joe Manchin in West Virginia and Tim Kaine in Virginia, now both U.S. Senators, helped make the two-state Tourist Train Authority a splinter in their two-state cooperation plank. The spirit of cooperation faded when Kaine left Richmond, VA, to chair the National Democratic Party, and Manchin moved into the U.S. Senate seat that Robert Byrd had held since before diesels replaced steam on the Southern West Virginia railroads. [Continued on next page.]

In 2011, with the governor's mansion in Richmond under new management, Governor Bob McDonnell, a Republican, did away with a package of several dormant State-sanctioned authorities, including the Tourist Train Development Authority.

While the Virginia General Assembly repealed the Tourist Train Authority in 2011, at the start of the 2013 session, State Senator Phillip P. Puckett, (D-Russell), introduced a bill (SB 819) that would resurrect the authority without putting a single piece of rolling stock on the track. The bill cleared the Senate Committee on Local Government on Jan. 22, with a 12-0 vote.

Childress points out that the Tourist Train Authority has not received any state funds. The Authority was established so Pocahontas County could cooperate with the Tourist Train Authority in Mercer County. SB 819 restores the make-up of the Virginia Authority Board that includes the two state legislators that represent the Pocahontas area, representatives from Tazewell County, Bluefield (VA), and Pocahontas governing bodies and four citizen members from Tazewell County. Childress said that plans are currently in the works to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for the hiking/riding trail along the connector tracks between Pocahontas and Bramwell this Spring.



**Depot Restoration.** We continue to follow the restoration work on Abingdon's historical railroad station. Note the extensive copper work. Copper gutters will be installed later. The tarp marks the place for one of the three skylights. [Photo below courtesy Charles Weaver, Historical Society of Washington County, VA]



### *Back Issues of the Whistle Stop*

Are you aware that back issues of the Whistle Stop can be found on our web site? You can view electronic copies beginning Jan 2009 at <http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org/newsletterarchive.php>.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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