

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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A very proud WVRHS&M president Mike Tilley beams from the rear platform of our newly painted ex-CLINCHFIELD business car 100, enjoying the culmination of several years attempt at bringing the car home to East Tennessee. While the circumstances behind the car being sold are most unfortunate, we can not help but be very excited about its addition to our fleet of railroad cars. The formal dedication of the car will occur at NCTM on March 15th (see page 5). If only Jim Goforth, who diligently worked to keep the memory of the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD alive, were here to share in this historic moment.

February 24th 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 24, 2014 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month, presented by Sidney Blankenbeckler, will feature a DVD on our 1990 excursion from Kingsport, TN to Richlands, VA with steam locomotive #4501. This was one of our best trips during the NORFOLK SOUTHERN STEAM PROGRAM era. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewell

Our sympathy is extended to George and Margaret Holley in the death of Margaret's sister, Helen Billings, on February 11, 2014, in Johnson City. Amy Blevins' grandmother, Bernice Thweatt, departed this life peacefully, quietly, and with a smile on her face on February 7. The Blevins family appreciates all the concerns, thoughts, and prayers. Please also keep the following folk in your thoughts as they deal with health concerns: Linda Calhoun, Walter Byrd, and Bob Yapple. As always, let us know of any members, friends or families to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is 423.753.5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423.282.0918. We want to keep in touch.

APRIL EXCURSIONS TO RADFORD, VA AND BULLS GAP, TN

We are happy to announce that both of our Radford, VA and Bulls Gap, TN Steam Train excursions have sold out. The April 5th Radford trip sold out just in a little over a week and the April 6th Bulls Gap trip sold out right behind it. We will have a large train this year with 15 coaches. The motive power will be steam locomotive #630, which is ex-ET&WNC #207 that operated between Johnson City and Elizabethton between 1952 and 1967.

The Bristol excursions have always been popular with the general public and have been fast sellers. Watauga Valley members will host the trips, partnering with Norfolk Southern and the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum

LATE DUES NOTICES

Late dues notices were recently sent out to all members that have not renewed for 2014. Please act fast and get your dues notices mailed back to WVRHS&M, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432. Time is running out and your name will be removed from the membership list.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2014

The WVRHS&M Program Committee is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2014. Please contact Nick White at 423-742-5797 if you have an interest in showing a program this year. We are looking for speakers if you know someone that would come and present a railroad-related program. And, as always, were looking for DVD and slide programs.

PHOTOS OF CLINCHFIELD NO. 1 NEEDED

WVRHS&M member Alf Peoples is in the planning stages of writing another Clinchfield book on the Ole No 1. Please call 423-753-5797 if you have pictures of No. 1 as Alf is looking for photos to publish.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

Our library collection in Jonesborough is growing fast. We appreciate all the donations that have been made. Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the office at (423) 753-5797.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

GENERAL. The bad weather has taken its toll on the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team for working at the yard these last several weeks. Hopefully the weather will turn around and we can get some of the work done that was planned for this spring.

We have renewed interest in expanding the capacity of the Spring Street Coach Yard. Details will be announced in the coming weeks. Expanding the yard will be required to store our newest piece of equipment, the Clinchfield 100.

Powhatan Arrow coach: is still in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC .

St Augustine coach: has arrived back at the Spring St. Coach Yard to finish the interior work. The mechanical team is working on replacing the rubber tile in the restrooms along with working on the lighting ballast and rewiring in the car.

Moultrie diner: WVRHS&M members have been cleaning the kitchen area.

Crescent Harbor sleeper / lounge: work has resumed on the Genset. Also, head end power wiring repair is going on under the car.

MOTOR CAR STORAGE NEEDED

We need a dry place out of the weather to store our motor car, preferring a building. If any of our members has or knows a place we can store and move our motor car, please give us a call at 423-753-5797.



A photo taken aboard the “Trans-Siberian Express”? Not hardly. This is the vestibule of an Amfleet coach on an AMTRAK Northeast Regional during the January 21st storm that pummeled the East Coast. Many car doors aboard the train were frozen, forcing passengers to play musical cars upon leaving. Surprisingly, it was toasty, almost too much so, inside the lead cars but, given the frigid temperatures outside, there were few complaints, and the warmth provided a brisk beverage business for the Amcafe.

In the News



VMT ANNOUNCES THE 611 “DREAM TEAM”

The Virginia Museum of Transportation and the Fire Up 611 Committee have announced the mechanical team for the restoration of the N&W Class J #611 steam passenger locomotive. "This is our dream team," said Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., executive director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation. "The individuals selected know the 611 better than anyone. We are positive that the 611 is in good hands with this incredible team." The Mechanical Team includes people who worked for the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Department during the 611's last excursion runs in the 1990s. "The mechanical team has the experience, knowledge and dedication to bring the NORFOLK & WESTERN Class J 611 back to life," said J. Preston Claytor, Fire Up 611! Committee Chairman. The date to begin work at NCTM has not been announced.



OUTLINE OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE TO ROANOKE TAKES SHAPE

When it begins running in a few years, the train from Roanoke to Washington, DC, will cruise at a top speed of 79 mph, reaching the nation's capital in five hours, according to project requirements. That's a four-hour car trip; however, rail passengers won't have a steering wheel to hang onto and may read, surf the Web or sleep.

State leaders, NORFOLK SOUTHERN and AMTRAK are advancing a plan to start passenger rail service in Roanoke in the form of one daily round-trip train between here and points east and north. The fare hasn't been announced, but a tentative schedule has. The train will leave Roanoke at 6:19 a.m. and arrive at Union Station in Washington at 11:20 a.m. To return, rail passengers will catch the southbound train in Washington at 4:50 p.m. and reach Roanoke, the end of the line, at 9:55 p.m.

Last week, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and NS signed a 29-page infrastructure funding agreement. NS will upgrade its rail facilities at state expense, which means new track, signals and facilities in and between Roanoke and Lynchburg. For paying the tab, the state will get track capacity to furnish to AMTRAK, which will operate the service under a separate agreement. The new agreement gave engineers the go-ahead to design the infrastructure in Roanoke, which must include a platform and facilities for maintenance and housing of the train overnight. There's also a detailed timeline and costs.

Construction of infrastructure is scheduled to begin in 2015. The Roanoke facilities should be done in 2016. The state agreed to pay the vast majority of infrastructure costs, a total of \$92.7 million, saying the project "provides public benefits by enhancing the movement of passengers by rail, reducing highway congestion and promoting fuel efficiency."

Roanoke will be responsible for providing a train station adjacent to the platform and for providing parking, the agreement said. It is also focused on upgrading a trackside culvert. NS will pay no costs under the infrastructure agreement, though it would be responsible for certain overruns if any occur.

The service is scheduled to begin operating in September 2017 at the latest. NS agreed to give the passenger train service a guaranteed 30 years of use of its tracks. [Condensed from an article by Jeff Sturgeon / Roanoke Times, January 15, 2014.]



WMSR ACQUIRES PULLMAN BUSINESS CAR



Fortunately for WVRHS&M, the 100 came to us in better shape. We wish our friends in Maryland good luck with this project.

Former WESTERN MARYLAND RAILWAY executive class car No. 204 was recently donated to the WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD. During the past few weeks, the car has been prepared for transportation and moved from its current site in Swanton, MD to the WMSR maintenance shops at Ridgeley, WV. The ultimate goal of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Foundation is to restore No. 204 to operating condition for use on the WMSR.

The WMSR's acquisition of No. 204 is part of a continuing effort to preserve, restore and operate historic railroad equipment. Built by the Pullman Company in 1918 and later sold to the WESTERN MARYLAND RAILWAY, No. 204 was used extensively as a business car by WM company executives traveling over the road. ["Automatic Block", Western Maryland NRHS]



BARRIGER LIBRARY PHOTOS ONLINE

A large number of old railroad photos, many from glass negatives, are available from the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library (part of the St. Louis Mercantile Library) at www.flickr.com/photos/barrigerlibrary. The Barriger Library holds many railroad documents and can be visited for reference purposes. It is operated by the University of Missouri-St. Louis. [Railroad Heritage Alliance]



ET&WNC RHS 2014 CONVENTION

The East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society will be holding its annual convention at the Carnegie Hotel on State of Franklin Road in Johnson City in late June of 2014. More information to follow as it is made available.



RECORD AMTRAK RIDERSHIP

Record AMTRAK ridership was experienced again in Fiscal Year 2013. This continues a long term trend that has seen annual ridership increase from 21 million in 2000 to 31.6 million in 2013. Ridership on the Northeast Corridor was 11.4 million, the second best year ever. Ticket revenue also set an all time record of \$2.1 billion. Growth in ridership has been so great that capacity constraints are limiting further growth on all services. [AMTRAK and the Washington Post]



MORE INFORMATION ON THE RESTORATION OF GSMR STEAM ENGINE #1702

Last month "Whistle Stop" reported on the return of steam to the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD. GSMR is breaking ground in Dillsboro, NC at the construction site of a new engine repair shop. This new indoor facility will be exclusive to the renovation and repair of the engine during the winter months and work can proceed without interruption of weather or other elements. Swain County, in cooperation with GSMR, has also begun soliciting for public bids from qualified private steam restoration contractors. Once selected, these contractors will work alongside current GSMR shop repair employees. The physical work is expected to begin after the engine is relocated from its current location in Dillsboro. After it is carefully transferred to the new engine repair shop the entire project of restoration is expected to take anywhere from 12-18 months.

Upcoming Events



February 28 & March 1, 2014: Asheville Model Train Show, WNC AG Center, Fletcher, NC. For information, go to <http://www.asheville-trainshow.com>.



March 15, 2014: NCTM in Spencer, NC will host "Clinchfield Days", an event featuring special guest speakers that had ties with the Clinchfield Railroad; train rides on WVRHS&M's "Clinchfield" Business Car 100; and a photo session with the 100 and CC&O caboose on the NCTM turntable. Further details will be available at our February 24th General Membership Meeting or you can call the office at 423-753-5797 and leave your phone number; we will call you back.



March 21-23, 2014: "Cherry Blossom Special". See page 7.



April 5-6, 2014: NORFOLK SOUTHERN 21ST Century Steam excursions sponsored by WVRHS&M. **BOTH TRIPS ARE SOLD OUT.**



April 12, 2014: 12th Annual NC Railroad Expo at the Hickory, NC Metro Center. Vendors will have on hand items for all models scales. Also for sale will be lanterns, locks, photographs, videos, DVDs and books. For details, read <http://www.tarheelpress.com/APRshow.pdf>



May 29 – June 1, 2014:
"Streamliners at Spencer",
NCTM, Spencer, NC.

Planned is a four-day festival for lovers of classic streamlined diesel locomotives of the 1930s through the '50s. **16 diesel locomotives** (subject to timely transportation and mechanical availability) will be gathered around NCTM's 37-stall roundhouse for daytime photos, special operations, nighttime shots and more. Primarily a photographic event, this will be a rail fan's delight.



To order tickets, go to <http://www.nctrans.org/>

*The N.C. Transportation Museum Foundation and The
Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum invite
you to ride the rails to our nation's capital....*



The Washington, DC Cherry Blossom Special

March 21-23, 2014

For the fourth year, the N.C. Transportation Museum will allow visitors to ride the rails on a scenic overnight journey to the nation's capital. The "Cherry Blossom Special" is a 3-day / 2-night scenic excursion from the Piedmont of North Carolina to Washington, DC aboard vintage rail cars, the St. Augustine and Powhatan Arrow. The event happens March 21-23, sponsored by the N.C. Transportation Museum Foundation and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum.

Passengers can choose to board at the Charlotte, Salisbury, Greensboro or Cary AMTRAK stations. Following a picturesque journey by rail, our travelers will arrive in Alexandria, VA, just outside of the nation's capital.

After a short stop at the hotel, motor coaches 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 features a trip to the heart of DC, where our travelers will have the entire morning and part of the afternoon to explore the 10 Smithsonian Museums along the National Mall, the Newseum, National Gallery of Art or the National Archives & Records Administration.

During an early afternoon tour of Mt. Vernon, visitors will experience the home of George Washington, with more than a dozen original structures, Washington's tomb and more. Following dinner in Old Town Alexandria, a relaxing evening cruise on the Potomac River will be enjoyed by all.

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

All Tickets Are Deluxe Coach Class, Aboard the St. Augustine 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.

**To order tickets or for more
information, please visit**

www.nctrans.org

or call

(704) 636-2889 ext. 237 or ext. 257.

General Public

\$595/person Single Occupancy \$480/person Double Occupancy

**Special rates for "Family" level members of the N.C. Transportation
Museum, and Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society**

\$570/person Single Occupancy \$455/person Double Occupancy

Whistle Stop

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL

Norfolk & Western's Clinch Valley Line



Detailed history documents construction and operation of the N & W's scenic line through the Clinch Valley area of southwest Virginia between Bluefield (Graham) and Norton. Coverage highlights include development of the towns and villages along the route, construction photographs of the rugged area between Pounding Mill and Cedar Bluff and between St. Paul and Coeburn, passenger service, freight service and the early years after the formation of Norfolk Southern and the assimilation of the former Interstate

Railroad and the Southern Railway's St. Charles Branch into the Clinch Valley District as the Clinch Valley Extension. Hard cover with color cover, 432 pages includes 48 page color section; includes 750+ photographs/sketches, 80+ maps/track charts and 75+ timetable entries plus miscellaneous tables, charts and sketches.

Retail: \$65.00 Special: \$50.00

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