

Whistle Stop



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

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One of the stars of "Streamliners at Spencer" was "C&O 8016", which actually is an old friend, CLINCHFIELD #800, in disguise. Upon retirement from CSX, who renumbered it #116, the F7A was bought by the C&O Historical Society in Clifton Forge, VA, repainted in CHESAPEAKE & OHIO passenger scheme and assigned number 8016. It has been on lease to the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad in northeast West Virginia (photo above) since 1994, serving as power for tourist trains. Rumors are floating about that the C&O Historical Society will lease the locomotive to NCTM, where it will be repainted in its original CLINCHFIELD scheme.

[Photo by Gary Everhart; used with permission.]

June 23rd General Membership Meeting

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will be held on June 23rd, starting at 6:30 p.m., and located at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. This month's program will feature the SOUTHERN RAILWAY in the 1970's around Salisbury and Spencer, NC and will be presented by Howard Orfield. Come out and bring a friend.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewel

Congratulations to Thomas Black as a graduating senior in the Class of 2014 from Daniel Boone High School, Gray, TN, on May 24th. We wish many fulfilling experiences will be his in the coming years.

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with their various concerns: the Jim Calhoun family, Art DeVoe, Carrie Denny, Anna Banner, Bob May, and Bob Yaple. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family 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. Your help is appreciated.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

DONATIONS: Jim Lonon made a monetary donation to the restoration of the CLINCHFIELD 100. Tony King donated marker lights for the rear of CLINCHFIELD 100.

GENERAL: Yard capacity expansion is still in the discussion stage and the only solution so far is extending the railroad gate about 40 feet. The WVRHS&M Board is working with the landlord in regards to studying the extension of our two tracks.

ROLLING STOCK:

CLINCHFIELD 100. An AMTRAK Structural Engineer will be arriving at the Jonesborough Coach Yard during the last week of June to begin the study to determine if Car 100 is a candidate to travel on AMTRAK.

MOULTRIE 400 diner. Dan Freeman is working on the Christmas Tree Lights over the electrical locker. Jim Calhoun has been working on the refrigeration on the car.

ST. AUGUSTINE 500 coach. The car is up North in the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program.

POWHATTAN ARROW 539 coach. The car is up North in the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program.

CRESCENT HARBOR 2351 sleeper / lounge. Repairs on the Head End Power have been completed. The repairs are from the AMTRAK excursion during which a short happened and burned out some wires. Work continues on installing the genset.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT COACH YARD

With all the activities at the coach yard, we need you on a Tuesday or Saturday to volunteer to help work on the equipment. We have a project for everyone. Come on down to Jonesborough during one of the two days or call the chapter office at 423-753-5797 and let us know of your interest.



Railroad Heritage Alliance update attached to end of newsletter.

In the News



ST. LOUIS MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION AND VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION TO TRADE HISTORIC LOCOMOTIVES

[NS Press Release] The Museum of Transportation, St. Louis, and the Virginia Museum of Transportation are in discussions to bring NORFOLK AND WESTERN Y6a steam engine #2156, currently in the St. Louis museum, back to its place of origin at Roanoke, Va., on a five-year loan for display at the Virginia museum, in a transaction facilitated by NORFOLK SOUTHERN.

In exchange, the Virginia museum will send to St. Louis a SOUTHERN RAILWAY diesel General Motors EMD FTB unit to complement the St. Louis museum's FTA demonstration unit.



Photo from VPI&SU Archives

"This will reunite the last surviving Y-class locomotive, one of the hardest pulling steam locomotives ever built, with the Class J #611 and the Class A #1218 in Roanoke, where all three were designed and built by NORFOLK AND WESTERN," said Molly Butterworth, cultural site manager for the St. Louis Museum of Transportation. "In return, our historic FTA, built in 1939 to demonstrate to the rail industry the efficiency of diesel power, will be reunited with its complimentary B unit."

"We are thrilled to welcome the Y6a home again," said Bev Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation. "We're grateful to the St. Louis Museum of Transportation for this opportunity to reunite three powerful sisters of steam in their home town."

The Museum of Transportation, a St. Louis County Park in west St. Louis County, MO, houses what has been recognized as one of the largest and best collections of transportation vehicles in the world. With over 70 locomotives, half of them "one-of-a-kind" or "sole survivors" of their type, the Museum has one of the most complete collections of American railroad motive power.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation, Virginia's official transportation museum, is home to two of the most powerful steam locomotives in existence today: the N&W Class A #1218 and the N&W Class J #611.



GSMR 2-8-0 #1702 UPDATE

As far as the #1702 is concerned [Great Smoky Mountains Railroad] started cutting on the backhead of the boiler so we can get ready to begin the boiler check. We also marked a grid layout on the firebox and boiler so that we can check the thickness of the metal. We have to determine the thickness of the metal before we can proceed with the restoration! [GSMR blog]



NARROW GAUGE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

One of the most extensive collections of historical narrow gauge equipment in the West is up for sale. Lindey and Rosa Ashby, operators from the 1980's till 2004 of the Georgetown Loop narrow gauge railroad in Georgetown, Co, have decided to sell part of their collection, and offer other pieces of rolling stock for lease.

Locomotives for sale include two Westside Lumber Company Shays, Nos. #8 and #12, and General Electric 44 ton diesel #15, which was on lease to the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. There are also about 42 pieces of rolling stock, including flatcars, gondolas, observation cars, and cabooses that are for sale.

Staying in the collection, but available for lease, are two Baldwin 2-8-0s that once ran in South America, and a former West Side Shay, #14, a Rio Grande Southern caboose, #0400, along with several boxcars and flatcars.

When the Ashbys removed the equipment from the Georgetown Loop at the end of their contract, they had hoped to find a place to operate the equipment; the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden was kind enough to help them out, and they were very grateful! [From "The East Coast Champion", Florida East Coast NRHS]



CRIMINAL CHARGES IN LAC-MÉGANTIC DISASTER

Three MONTREAL, MAINE & ATLANTIC RAILWAY employees have been arrested and, along with the railroad company itself, will face 47 counts of criminal negligence stemming from last year's deadly oil train wreck, multiple media outlets report. The announcement comes from Jean-Pascal Boucher, a spokesman for Quebec's director of criminal and penal prosecutions. Thomas Harding, the engineer who parked the train before it rolled into town; Jean Demaitre, a manager of train operations; and Richard Labrie, a dispatcher, were all arrested and appeared in court in Lac-Mégantic, where 47 people were killed and more than 30 buildings were leveled on July 6, 2013.

According to The Toronto Star, Harding was working on a boat in his backyard in Farnham [Quebec] Monday afternoon when heavily armed officers arrived on the scene and arrested the former engineer at gunpoint. Harding's lawyer, Thomas Walsh, expressed frustration after the arrest and said the show of force was completely unnecessary.

Shortly after the wreck, the provincial police opened a criminal investigation into the accident and on at least one occasion raided the yard office in Farnham, looking for evidence. The police wrapped up its investigation earlier this year and handed the case over to the Quebec prosecutor's office.

Reactions in Lac-Mégantic are mixed. Yannick Gagné, owner of the Musi-Café who lost three employees in the accident, says he had no interest in attending the court hearing and that he wanted to move on with his life. Raymond Lafontaine, a local businessman who lost family members says he would be in court. "They destroyed half my family," he tells the Globe and Mail. "These arrests are justified. These men had a specific job to do and if they had done their jobs well, people wouldn't have died." [TRAINS NEWSWIRE]



The Roundhouse [Greensboro NRHS] reports that NS transported locomotives for the Streamliners at Spencer gathering at its own expense and that the costs are being negotiated with other railroads that also moved them on their lines.

Photo Section

Our own Ian Ring attended the recent "Streamliners at Spencer" event at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, taking these wonderful photos and making those of us unable to attend terribly jealous. The picture at lower right shows Ian with noted railroad artist Andy Fletcher.



611 Farewell Celebration.

by Gary Price

[Whistle Stop welcomes back contributor Gary Price after a well-earned hiatus.]

As a 13 year old railfan, I was glued to the television on October 16, 1981. On this day WDBJ7 news in Roanoke was airing a special report on NORFOLK AND WESTERN J Class 611 being removed from the Virginia Museum of Transportation and on her way to be restored to excursion service. I was thrilled and wished so much that I could have been there that day to enjoy the sights and sound of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. The restoration took ten months and once back under steam, the 611 quickly became a fan favorite with her streamlined beauty and deep throated whistle. She was at home on the high iron with a full head of steam.

Fast forward to October 29, 1994. The 611 steamed quietly back into Bristol at the end of a sold out Watauga Valley excursion. My coach was empty as all the passengers had detrained at Marion, VA, I turned the overhead lights off and absorbed as much sights and sounds as I could. We had received the news that this would be our last 611 excursion. NORFOLK SOUTHERN had made a corporate decision to end the steam excursion program. She finished out the 1994 schedule and steamed her way back to Roanoke. She was later returned to her home at the Virginia Museum of Transportation, cold, lifeless, but not forgotten. Fans from all over the world came to visit, remembering the good ole days, and some hoping to see her steam again. A generation of young people grew up around her, never seeing her in her glory, but internet, social media, and YouTube allowed them to be able to experience the sights and sounds through their computers and televisions.

The "fireup611 campaign" started a spark that grew into a fire: if the fans wanted to see the 611 operated once more, then they could donate to the 611 cause and be a part of history. Money came in from all over the world and news quickly spread that it was going to be a reality. The fans had stood up to the challenge, and preparations were being made to move the 611 for restoration.

On May 24, 2014, close to a thousand of 611 supporters arrived in Roanoke to give the 611 a proper farewell as the time had now come to move the locomotive to the North Carolina Transportation Museum for restoration. The Virginia Museum of Transportation rolled out the red carpet, put on a fantastic event, and the weather was perfect. The event was attended by several well known NORFOLK AND WESTERN authors, a live webcam was hosted by Jim Wrinn, editor of Trains magazine, and the Watauga Valley RHS&M was well represented. There were a variety of vendors on hand, several selling new 611 hats and shirts, and a lot of vintage clothing being worn from the 80's and 90's excursion programs. The entire fireup611 crew was on hand to shake hands or answer questions about the restoration.

History repeats itself.

At 2 p.m. NORFOLK SOUTHERN SD40-2 diesels 1648 and 3216 and caboose 555761 eased back into museum property and coupled to N&W tool car 9647. The locomotives then began to pull the 611 backward out of the museum ever so slowly. The 611 had to be pulled backwards about a half mile to reach the switch needed to get her over to the main line. At 3:30 p.m. the diesels began shoving the 611 past the [continued on next page]

museum on the mainline at about 15 mph. As she passed her fans, a roar of applause filled the air. Once reaching the O. Winston Link Museum, the consist was then backed to Shaffers Crossing for final preparation to North Carolina.



On Sunday, May 25, 2014 at 9 a.m. a special consist left Roanoke bound for Spencer, NC. NS NOERFOLK & WESTERN heritage diesel 8103, WABASH E8a 1009, 611, N&W auxiliary water tender, N&W tool car and NS caboose made quite a sight as several fans chased the consist the entire route.

Official restoration began on June 2. The fireup611 crew estimates around 9 months to complete the restoration, so hopefully around March 2015, we will once again here the sights and sounds of the Norfolk and Western J Class 611, "The Spirit of Roanoke".

Upcoming Events



July 4, 2014: Watauga Valley RHS&M's Whistle Machine will participate in Kingsport, TN's Independence Day Parade.



August 7-9, 2014: The 2014 Railroad Heritage Alliance Annual Membership Meeting, Summit Pointe Conference and Events Center, Spartanburg, SC. Details can be found appended to this newsletter.



August 16, 2014: Watauga Valley RHS&M's Summer Excursion on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD in Bryson City, NC.



November 1st and 2nd, 2014: The very popular Fall Amtrak Excursions, co-hosted by WVRHS&M in conjunction with NCTM. Saturday, November 1, the train will travel from Spencer, NC to Appomattox, VA and return. On Sunday, November 2, a roundtrip from Spencer to Toccoa, GA for their Fall Festival is scheduled.

For Your Viewing Pleasure ...



Apparently "foaming" is not limited to the two-legged variety of rail fan. Check out <http://tinyurl.com/mmgmbyk> [Thanks to Kati Phelps for forwarding this amusing clip.]



You can find plenty of video of the Streamliners event online. Here's a 35-minute YouTube short: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsjmYlSmcNY>

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Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the organization 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 the editor and the photographer.

Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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June 15, 2014

To Railroad Historians, Railfans, and Anyone with a General Interest in Railroads:

We would like to introduce you to the Railroad Heritage Alliance. The organization was founded three years ago to give those interested in railroads as a hobby, an alternate choice to unite with others with the common interest. When we founded RHA, our objectives were to make the organization affordable, with a goal to be a clearinghouse for information on railroads and events that might be of interest, and to serve members and local groups. Dues are \$15 annually for an individual or \$20 for an entire family residing in one household. One way RHA differs from other similar organizations is that members of the Local Membership Groups (LMGs) are not required to belong to RHA. Members should *want* to join RHA, *not be required* to join.

How can we offer lower membership rates and yet allow our LMGs the freedom to operate without forcing members to join RHA? We are a totally volunteer organization and we rely on electronic media to communicate with membership. Our business plan is simple: (total membership) X (dues \$15.00) = annual budget. The additional \$5 generated by a family membership goes into reserve funds. This formula works whether the organization membership is 200 or 2,000.

RHA was designed to be a support function and to coordinate the efforts of its LMGs. Is it working? Indeed, our LMGs are growing rapidly. Some groups have almost doubled in size over the past 3 years. We now have members in 12 states and growing. We invite you to join in the fun we are having in pursuit of our hobby, railroading.

For more information, please contact RHA secretary Kati Phelps at rha.kati@charter.net.

Lester Collins
President, Railroad Heritage Alliance, Inc.



announcing....

Railroad Heritage Alliance, Inc.

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The 2014 Railroad Heritage Alliance Annual Membership Meeting

Location: Summit Pointe Conference and Events Center, Spartanburg, SC

Dates: August 7, 8 and 9, 2014

Schedule of Events

Thursday, August 7, 2014

1:00 pm Tour of the new South Carolina Inland Port, Greer SC

Evening. Meet the RHA officers

Friday, August 8, 2014

8:00 am Tour of Republic Locomotive, Greenville SC. Drive a locomotive!

1:00 pm Greenville & Western Railroad, Belton SC. Ride in a caboose on a revenue freight train.

Evening: Speaker to be announced

Saturday, August 9, 2014

8:00 am Tour Russell Museum, Boiling Springs SC. This is a private, not open to the public museum, featuring lots of railroad & NASCAR collectibles, automobiles, and miscellaneous items including an operating moonshine still (sorry, water only). This museum is one of South Carolina's best kept secrets!

12:00 noon. Eat at the world-famous Beacon Drive In, Spartanburg.

1:00 pm Tour the Hub City Railroad Museum, Spartanburg.

5:00 pm General Membership Meeting followed by dinner. After-dinner speaker Donald Purdee will make a presentation on his famous dad, Bill Purdee of the Southern/Norfolk Southern Railway steam program.

General Notes: The headquarters hotel is the Hampton Inn and Suites at Westgate Mall in Spartanburg. We have negotiated a very attractive rate for the event. Summit Pointe Conference and Events Center joins the Hampton Inn. City Range Restaurant, one of Spartanburg's finest, is located across the parking lot from Summit Pointe and many other restaurants are nearby. All transportation will be by charter bus boarding at Summit Pointe.

For your pre-registration form, please contact rha.kati@charter.net