

# Whistle Stop



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

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## *Steaming through Jonesborough*

Photographer John Livingston created this wonderful scene reminiscent of bygone days as SOU #4501 rolls eastbound through Jonesborough, TN on June 24<sup>th</sup>, steaming its way to Bristol for duty powering a weekend of exciting rail excursions. [Photo used with permission.]

## *General Membership Meeting*

The next WVRHS&M General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:30 p.m., and located at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. The program will be a DVD entitled "STEAM ON THE BRISTOL LINE", produced by Noonkester Video Productions, presented by Mike Noonkester, a long time member of WVRHS&M. See our excursion operating at full speed out of Bristol. Mark your calendar so you will not miss this meeting. Better yet, bring a guest.

## *Member Notes*

*By Nancy Jewel*

Our sympathy is extended to Mrs. Madeline McCabe in the death of her husband, James McCabe, on June 30, 2015. Jim enjoyed working in the Jonesborough yards on the WVRHS&M equipment but moved back to Pennsylvania when his health deteriorated. He will be missed.

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Carrie Denny, Jim Calhoun, Sidney Blankenbeckler, Gary Price, Bob Yaple, George Holley, and Mrs. James Smallwood. 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.

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### *Bristol Train Excursion A Great Success*



Even though I am a little late writing this message, I just wanted to thank all of you for a job well done on the June 26, 27, and 28 excursion trips to Radford and Bulls Gap. Everyone did an excellent job in hosting the excursion and performing the duties required to operate the train. I always enjoy getting feedback from our passengers about how professional the WVRHS&M was on the train in making our passengers enjoy the trip. Also below is an e-mail from Bill Schafer of TVRM thanking everyone for the hard work. As Bill stated below, let's do it again.

Mike Tilley  
President, WVRHS&M



Please convey to all your folks how much TVRM (and I) appreciate their support and their help to make the Bristol steam trips a success this past weekend. The acid test, of course, was whether or not everyone went home in as good a shape as they arrived, and I think we succeeded. Also, as far as I know, all the volunteers had a good time too.

Further, I heard nothing but good words from people as they left the trains. Many of them wanted to know who they could write to thank for the trips (I told them Wick Moorman). They wouldn't have felt that way if their on-board experience had been unpleasant.

Finally, you personally performed valuable, indispensable work by making sure everyone had a place to park, the box lunches got loaded and distributed as smoothly as I can remember, and two weddings went off without interference (or at least, too much interference) from our trains. Not to mention the thousands of other details you took care of that I'm not aware of or have forgotten.

Pulling off a steam-powered 18-car passenger train for over 2000 passengers in 2015 is difficult enough, even without weddings and rainstorms complicating the process. Thank you for your hard work, flexibility, and friendship. Let's do it again.

Best wishes,

Bill Schafer  
Director of Development  
Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

*By Bob Yaple*

**GENERAL.** As stated in the last Whistle Stop, there is renewed interest in expanding the WVRHS&M Coach Yard in Jonesborough. Talks are ongoing with the landlord in making this happen in the next few months. Drawings and surveys have already taken place.

### **ROLLING STOCK.**

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): is in NORFOLK SOUTHERN steam train program with steam engine #765.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): is in NORFOLK SOUTHERN steam train program with steam engine #765.

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): is at the Jonesborough Coach Yard for mechanical upgrades.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper/lounge (WATX 2351): is in NORFOLK SOUTHERN steam train program with steam engine #765.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATX 100): is at the Jonesborough Coach Yard for electrical upgrades.

Mechanical Volunteers are needed at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please call the office at 423-753-5797.

## *From the Vaults*



Mike Tilley passes along this photo of one of the last regularly-scheduled passenger trains through Johnson City in 1970, near the end of passenger service for the city. By then the train had been reduced to one car (a combine / coach) and one engine. The dormers for the old SOUTHERN station can be seen behind the train. It, too, would not survive the test of time.

## *In the News*

### *CHUCKEY DEPOT MUSEUM*

The official name of our museum is “Chucky Depot Museum at Jonesborough”. Construction crews are making great headway on the museum. The roof is going on at press time and the structure will be completely enclosed sometime in August. Plans are to bring contractors to the depot in late August to put on the metal roof and wire the facility. After the contractors have finished, the Jonesborough crew will come back to finish interior work. All members are welcome to drive by and see the work in progress but are asked to stay in the parking lot and not get in the construction area near the building. The depot/museum is located at 2<sup>nd</sup> St in Jonesborough at the NORFOLK SOUTHERN railroad crossing. Donations are being accepted to go in the museum. If you have anything that might be of interest, please call the WVRHS&M Office at (423) 753-5797. A call for volunteers to help man the museum when it opens will be issued; please keep this in mind. One sad note is that Linda Babb (who donated the Chucky Depot) passed away on July 17, 2015. Linda’s family saved the depot from destruction back in 50’s and kept it standing until they donated the structure to the town of Jonesborough.



### *Former ET&WNC Station in Johnson City Being Restored*

Restoration of the former ET&WNC railroad station in Johnson City is underway with the target of repurposing the structure as home to a craft brewery. Christened the Yee-Haw Brewing Co., the effort, spearheaded by co-owner Joe Baker (who also owns the former CC&O depot across the street, home to the Tupelo Honey Cafe), has the goal of producing lagers and pilsners with a wide distribution across East Tennessee, from “Chattanooga to Mountain City” according to Baker. Construction of the depot began in 1891, 18 years before the CC&O depot. It was most recently owned by the Genesee & Wyoming, Inc. The building was mentioned in “Architectural Digest” when the warehouse section was built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Owning two of the town’s original railroad stations gives Baker a substantial stake in some of Johnson City’s most historic real estate. [From the “Johnson City News & Neighbor”]



 **UPDATE ON AMTRAK SERVICE TO ROANOKE**

Sometime in 2017 is the date for the return of AMTRAK passenger train service to Roanoke. The Northeast Regional train that currently originates/terminates in Lynchburg will be extended to Roanoke, on the present schedule, with an early morning departure and late evening arrival back in Roanoke. Before any track or platform construction to accommodate the new train can begin a culvert needs to be strengthened, a project that is underway. As of early June, work on this first phase of AMTRAK's return is almost complete. A recent Roanoke Times story reported that the city had not received as much grant money as requested toward the construction of a proposed new multi-modal bus/train station in the downtown area but this will not affect the startup of AMTRAK service. With this preliminary work almost completed, when will the real work of constructing tracks and a platform begin? No dates have yet been announced. ["Turntable Times", Roanoke NRHS] [ED. NOTE: In a related news item, the idea of extending the service to Pulaski, VA – providing service to the New River Valley – is being discussed.]

 **Ex-Norfolk & Western Business Car Restoration Underway**

The Friends of the 261 organization has begun restoration of former NORFOLK & WESTERN business car "Lamberts Point". The nonprofit Friends used the car for several years on charters and excursions pulled by MILWAUKEE ROAD 4-8-4 #261. Now the group is moving ahead to restore the car closer to its original N&W appearance.

Restoration work is underway at the Friends shop in Minneapolis. The newer modern roof is being removed, which has exposed the original clerestory roof underneath which will be repaired and restored to its original appearance. The Friends will also perform interior updates and other repairs before repainting and lettering the car for N&W.

Pullman built the car for N&W in 1918. It features cherry woodwork with brass fixtures throughout the car, two large bedrooms, a dining room and lounge. Donations can be made at <http://www.261.com>. [TRAINS MAGAZINE NEWSWIRE]

 **Kelly Alexander Named NCTM Executive Director**

Secretary Susan Kluttz, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources (NCDCCR), announced that Kelly Alexander has been selected as the new executive director of the N.C. Transportation Museum. Kelly has been on staff at the Transportation Museum for more than 25 years and is well equipped to lead the museum into the future. Alexander has planned programs, managed group operations, overseen revenue generating activities, managed finances for a capital renovation, created partnerships with community organizations, overseen growth in the foundation's operating budget from \$500,000 to \$2 million and provided leadership in developing programming and financial planning with the museum board and NCDCCR. Alexander holds a B.A. degree from Catawba College. She expects to continue relationships with state and local government agencies, Transportation Museum foundation, Norfolk-Southern, staff and volunteers.

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**DRIVERS NEEDED FOR THE WATAUGA VALLEY WHISTLE TRUCK**

WVRHS&M is in need of drivers for our Whistle Truck to special events. If interested, please call (423) 753-5797. Training will be provided.

## *Upcoming Events*



**AUGUST 15:** WVRHS&M sponsored trip on GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD. For details:

<http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>



**AUGUST 28-30:** Lincoln Funeral Train and the Leviathan Locomotive. Tours, music, Civil War reenactments and other period activities. See

<http://www.nctrans.org/Events.aspx>.



**SEPTEMBER 11-13:** Western Maryland Scenic Railroad "Steel Wheels Festival". For details:

<https://www.movingfullsteamahead.com/content/steelwheels>.



**SEPTEMBER 12-13:** Tennessee Valley Railfest. For details:

<http://tvrail.com/pages/railfest>.



**OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1.** NCTM/WVRHS&M Fall AMTRAK excursions. See below.



**NOVEMBER 7-8:** 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Railfest model train show, Bluefield, WV.

### **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY STEAM!**

The remaining schedule for this year's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Steam Program:

NKP #765

SOU #4501

**JULY 25-26:** Youngstown – Ashtabula, OH

**SEP 12-13:** Jersey – Cleveland, TN

**AUG 1-2:** Buffalo – Corning, NY

**SEP 26-25:** Macon – Tennille, GA

**AUG 22-23:** Allentown – Pittston, PA

**OCT 3-4:** Atlanta – Toccoa, GA

**SEP 12-13:** Scranton – Nicholson, PA

For ticket information, visit the website of the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum at <http://www.tvrail.com> (#4501), or the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society at <https://www.fortwaynerailroad.org> (#765).

## *FALL AMTRAK EXCURSION TICKETS ON SALE*

Tickets will go on sale for NCTM's Autumn Train Excursions on July 22<sup>nd</sup> for NCTM and WVRHS&M members and July 23<sup>rd</sup> for the general public. Scheduled are "The Blue Ridge Autumn Special" from Spencer to Asheville, NC Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> and "The Virginia Autumn Special" from Spencer to Charlottesville, VA on Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. For detailed trip descriptions and ticket ordering, go to <http://tinyurl.com/oq443aq>.

### *Great Smoky Mountains Rail Excursion Tickets*

Tickets are still available for our August 15<sup>th</sup> "Summer Rail Excursion" on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. For detailed trip description and ticket ordering, go to <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>

## *More #4501 Action*



Several photographers did a magnificent job of capturing our June steam excursions.

From top left clockwise: Storming northbound out of Bristol on its June 26 trip to Radford [Mike Pierry, Jr.]; Departing across State Street into TN from Bristol's Union Station on June 27 excursion to Bulls Gap [Mike Pierry, Jr.];

On return from Bulls Gap, passing ex-ET&WNC station in Johnson City [Alf Peoples, WVRHS&M]; At track speed approaching Abingdon, VA on second excursion to Radford, June 28 [Mike Pierry, Jr.]; Rumbling past Abingdon's beautifully restored ex-N&W station [Charlie Plantholt, Baltimore NRHS]. All photos used with permission.



Want to view some live action? Google “**southern 4501 june 2015 youtube**”; check out this nice promo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7tbYlkwQ7o>; or watch 4501's test run sans diesel in May at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb5skTdvLvw>

## *Whistle Stop*

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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