

Whistle Stop



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

Volume 36 No. 12

December 2016



On November 19th, CSX, Food City, the Kingsport Area Chamber of Commerce and Dignity U Wear continued the 74-year, 110-mile tradition of spreading Christmas joy and goodwill throughout the TN/VA/KY tri-state coal region, distributing more than 15 tons and \$300,000 worth of clothing, food, candy, toys and gifts.

No December General Membership Meeting

**THE WATAUGA VALLEY CHRISTMAS MEAL ON DECEMBER 10th
REPLACED OUR DECEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING. THE
NEXT MEETING IS ON JANUARY 23rd, 2017. SEE YOU THERE!**

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Please continue to keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Suzie Tilley, Gary Price, George Ritchie, Carol May, Richard Baker's mother, Nancy Jewel, Kati Phelps, and Bob Yapple. As always, let me know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is (423) 753-5797 or call me at (423) 571-3226. Hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed and Happy New Year.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2017 Dues Notices have been mailed out and also sent electronically via e-mail. Please get your dues and check to Membership Chairman Edna Carter, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605 by December 31, 2016. You can join the WVRHS&M for \$20.00 individual, adding family members at \$5.00 each. Any questions e-mail wataugavalley@gmail.com.

2017 WATAUGA VALLEY EXCURSIONS

WVRHS&M will be announcing our 2017 excursion schedule in the next couple of months.

2017 WATAUGA VALLEY OFFICERS and BOARD ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee reports that the following were elected as 2017 Officers and Directors. We welcome the following:

Mike Tilley – President	Jeanie Walker – Treasurer
Bob Schubel – Vice President	Historian – Gary Price
James Smallwood – Secretary	
Board of Director – Jim Calhoun, Edna Carter, Don Findley	

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Ken Fleenor Steve, Laura, Katie, Julie Prsenaire Flo Weierbach



SANTA CABOOSE EVENT

The December 10th Santa Caboose event was a big hit for WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough. We had a good turnout of parents and children that attended the event. We want to thank all WVRHS&M members who helped with this event. Special thanks goes out to Junior Risner and his wife who played Mr. and Mrs. Claus both days, and Morgan Munsey, Miss Historic Jonesborough.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): In Spencer, NC serving on the “Christmas Poplar Express” trains out of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): In Spencer, NC serving on the “Christmas Poplar Express” trains out of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): In Spencer, NC serving on the “Christmas Poplar Express” trains out of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): In winter storage at the Coach Yard.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATV 100): In winter storage at the Coach Yard.

In the News



MEMBERS of RAILROAD SOCIETY LOOK FORWARD to CHUCKEY DEPOT OPENING [By John Kiener, Jonesborough *Herald and Tribune*]

There is an excitement down at the Spring Street Railroad yard in Jonesborough. Members of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum are preparing for the opening of the Chuckey Depot Museum. The site will not be just a “look and see” facility. Members are planning to host visitors and parties at the red caboose located adjacent to the depot.

“Many children have never seen a caboose,” Mike Tilley, the President of the WVRHSM, said. “The caboose will be open for people to visit after the first of the year. We plan to rent the caboose for birthday parties and other functions.”

“We are the largest railroad group in Tennessee. Most of our operations are in Jonesborough, but our mailing address is Johnson City,” he noted. Tilley, who worked for 40 years at the CSX railroad, was a station agent. He remembers in 1980 when the group was formed. “Thirty-five people showed up for our initial meeting. I am a charter member.”

The group, now composed of some 325 members, has signed an agreement to staff the Chuckey Depot Museum. Together with the Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, the two groups are responsible for developing interpretive exhibits and providing the operating manpower to open the facility to the general public.

The governing agreement with the Town of Jonesborough contains language stating it “...is intended to be perpetual with all parties working long term in partnership to develop and operate a successful railroad museum in Jonesborough.”

Tilley is on the Advisory Group that is to provide on-going direction and management to the Museum. The WVRHSM is charged with duties that include providing artifacts, materials and information used in the development of interpretive elements, their care and interpretation. The group will also be responsible for recruiting volunteers and will oversee their performance. Also of importance will be historical research of the history of the railroad in Jonesborough since it was constructed in the early 1800s and the development and impact of railroad lines in Tennessee’s oldest town. The railroad society acting at the direction of the Advisory Group will ensure that the Museum is open to the public on a regular schedule. [Continued on next page.]

“We will put pictures in the museum of depots from Bristol to Knoxville, many of which are now torn down,” Tilley said. “We are looking forward to working with the Heritage Alliance and the Town of Jonesborough.” He added, “I have been watching people take pictures of the depot. I think that we are going to be one of the best spots in Jonesborough.”

Currently, the WVRHSM gathers 60 or more of its members to assist railroad excursions using equipment that is owned by the organization. An equipment roster includes a *Clinchfield* business car, *Crescent Harbor* sleeper/lounge, *Moultrie* lightweight dining car, *Powhatan Arrow* and *St. Augustine* coaches. Other equipment includes a Clinchfield box car that serves as a work shop and a Chesapeake & Ohio cabooses that serves as the Spring Street Yard Office. A unique piece of equipment is a whistle machine that can be rented for a parade or a party. The self-contained trailer and hauler can reproduce the whistles of a number of historic whistles from the steam locomotive era.

The Southern Railroad X450 beside the Chuckey Depot was built in 1970 by the Garant Corporation in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It was placed in service by Southern until 1990 when the Norfolk Southern which inherited the cabooses decided to retire it.

The cabooses was donated to the Morristown Waste Treatment Center which planned to use it as a classroom focusing on environmental issues. When the project was abandoned, the WVRHSM purchased the car in 2005. The restoration of the car was completed this year and the car moved from Spring Street to the Chuckey Depot located on Second Street about 50 yards from the original Jonesborough depot that was torn down many years ago.

“The cost of obtaining a rail car is usually in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range,” Tilley said. “We will spend \$100,000 or more repairing the car in order to obtain Amtrak certification. The certification includes more than six-pages of requirements including insurance and manpower staffing before a car is permitted to travel on the nation’s rail system. Inspectors are sent to Jonesborough on a regular basis to evaluate the passenger vehicles owned by the WVRHSM.

“Our membership is made up of people from all walks of life,” Tilley said. “We have lawyers and other professionals along with men and women who have mechanical skills. Others enjoy working with persons who travel on our excursions.” The tax-exempt organization operates on an annual budget in excess of \$150,000. This revenue is generated by donations, excursion revenue, car leasing fees and membership dues.

Art Devoe from Jonesborough and Jack Maloney from Telford were assisting Tilley during a recent visit to the rail yard at 210 Spring Street. Devoe is the group’s Mechanical Officer while Maloney serves as its Supply Official. Maloney worked in the milling business for many years and is a charter member of the group.

One of the cars located at the site is the *Clinchfield 100*. Many railroad enthusiasts in the area are familiar with this Santa Train Car.” It was used for many years on the annual trip from Elkhorn City, Kentucky to Kingsport when Santa throws candy off the back on the train at numerous stops along the route.

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum holds membership meetings the fourth Monday of the month excluding December at the Johnson City Public Library. This year a dinner celebrating the holidays [took] place at the McKinney Center in Jonesborough. Work on rail cars at the society’s yards in Jonesborough takes place on a regular basis each Tuesday and Saturday, weather permitting. For additional information, telephone the WVRHSM at (423) 753-5797, contact them on the internet at wataugavelley@gmail.com or visit the web site at www.wataugavelleyrrhsm.org. Their mailing address is P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, Tennessee 37605-0432.

Virginia Chooses Contractor to Build Roanoke AMTRAK Platform

[Jeff Sturgeon, "The Roanoke Times" via "Blue Ridge Dispatcher", Blue Ridge NRHS]

Rail officials have chosen Faulconer Construction Co. to build the future Amtrak boarding platform in downtown Roanoke, according to Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation spokesman Chris Smith. The agency erroneously said earlier that a contractor had yet to be chosen. Faulconer, a Charlottesville-based contractor, has assigned the project to the company's Elliston area office.

Crews will begin early next year to build a raised waiting and boarding area near Norfolk Avenue for a contracted price of \$10.9 million.

An artist's concept drawing released by Roanoke officials Thursday depicts a pitched roof canopy with room underneath for people to stand. City officials said the finished platform may differ slightly from the rendering.

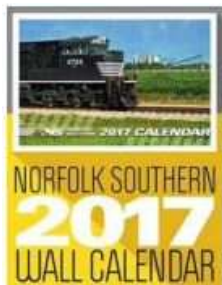
Amtrak will operate the train on Norfolk Southern tracks. Its Northeast Regional train service, which connects Lynchburg to a variety of Mid-Atlantic and New England destinations, will be extended to Roanoke by late 2017, under current plans.

The state has agreed to furnish \$101.6 million to Norfolk Southern for capital projects necessary for Roanoke to join Amtrak's network.

Earlier this year, neither of two bidders for the platform job said they could finish in time for a late 2017 launch, at which point Norfolk Southern repeated the call for bids. In the subsequent round, Faulconer said it could meet the late 2017 goal and was chosen by the railroad to build the platform, Smith said. He offered the information when asked why platform construction had not started this fall as the agency had predicted more than six months ago.

What's Next for AMTRAK and Wick Moorman?

AMTRAK Chairman Anthony Coscia was well aware of Wick Moorman's reputation as a rail industry leader during his tenure at Norfolk Southern Corp., where Moorman was chairman, president and CEO until his retirement last year. Coscia believed early on in the search process that Moorman would be the "ideal" choice to guide the national intercity passenger railroad into the future. The board believed that Amtrak was already a "great company" with a lot of potential, given its longtime status as an undercapitalized institution. Rather than simply "sharpening our lobbying effort" to hit up Congress for a larger appropriation, Coscia says, the board thought it would be better to spend more time convincing stakeholders that the railroad serves the public well with the limited resources that it has. [*Progressive RAILROADING*]



The official 2017 Norfolk Southern Corp. wall calendar features color photographs taken by railroaders from around NS's 20,000-mile system. From heritage locomotives to intermodal and special loads - there's something for everyone who enjoys railroading scenes from the "Thoroughbred of Transportation". The 11x16.5-inch calendar is pre-punched for easy handling. Perfect for holiday gift-giving. Price of \$12.99 includes shipping, handling, and applicable tax. Allow 7 to 10 business days for delivery. To order by credit card (Visa, American Express,

MasterCard), call toll-free 9 to 5, (800) 264-4394. Or, send a check or money order to: Norfolk Southern Calendar, c/o Nyberg Fletcher & White, 801 Cromwell Park Dr., Suite 100, Glen Burnie, MD 21061.

Watauga Valley Christmas Gala ...

Great food, fun and fellowship were had by all at the Watauga Valley Annual Christmas Dinner on Saturday, December 10th at the McKinney Center in Jonesborough. There were approx. 80 attendees packing the house. President Mike Tilley conducted a short business meeting. We want to thank all our ladies for the hard work in putting this great event together for the gala Christmas Event.



Upcoming Events

SOUTHERN RAILWAY No. 154 Photography Charter

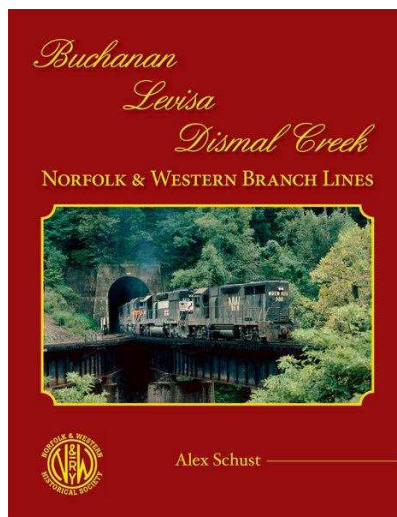
Friday, June 16, 2017: Join Southern Rail Productions for a night photography session with Southern Railway No. 154 at the Three Rivers Rambler water tank on the riverfront in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee. This photo shoot, hosted by Southern Rail Productions and directed by Steve Barry will start promptly at 9:00 pm. The photo shoot will feature actors and props to give the photographs an authentic appearance, optimal lighting will allow for both photography and video. Tripods are highly recommended.

Saturday, June 17, 2017: The day photography session is set to begin at 7:00 am. Departing from the Knoxville, Tennessee depot, Southern Railway No. 154 will lead the excursion on the point of a period 1940's freight consist. The day will feature many picturesque photo runbys, including new photo locations for steam. Period automobiles will be placed in prime locations throughout the day to add to the authenticity of the photographs. Southern Railway No. 154 is set to wear a special paint scheme for both sessions.

More information: <http://southernrailproduc.wixsite.com/southern-rail/charters>.

For Your Reading Pleasure ...

Buchanan - Levisa - Dismal Creek ~ Norfolk & Western Branch Lines



The Norfolk & Western Historical Society's newest Branch Line Series book uses 248 pages, 93 photographs, 62 drawings and 27 maps to tell how the W.M. Ritter Lumber Company built its narrow-gauge Big Sandy & Cumberland logging railroad from Devon, West Virginia to Grundy, Virginia between 1900 and 1916, how the lumber company extended its logging railroad along the Levisa Fork between 1918 and 1925, and how the N&W acquired the narrow-gauge common carrier and logging railroad in 1923 and made it the basis of the standard gauge Buchanan and Levisa Branch Lines.

The N&W purchased the BS&C in 1923 and reconstructed parts of the original BS&C and the W.M. Ritter Lumber Company logging railroad between 1928 and 1931 to standard gauge. In addition to the reconstructed narrow gauge railroad, the N&W constructed the Devon Tunnel and Raitt Tunnel and built a new railroad along Lester Fork and Home Creek during the 1928 - 1931 time period. The reconstructed narrow-gauge BS&C and the new railroad through Devon Tunnel and Raitt Tunnel became the original Buchanan Branch and the Levisa Branch. The Buchanan Branch Extension and the Dismal Creek Branch were built in 1936. The coal industry started on the newly built Buchanan and Levisa branches in 1932 and expanded eastward on the Buchanan Branch and Dismal Creek Branch in 1935 and 1936.

The coal industry expanded west along the Levisa Fork into Pike County, Kentucky with the Levisa Branch Extension in 1944. As the coal industry grew the Buchanan - Levisa - Dismal Creek Branches also grew as spurs were built to reach new coal operations. Between 1966 and 1969 the N&W built the Wyatt Cut-Off to connect the Buchanan and Dismal Creek Branches with the Clinch Valley District to provide a shorter route to Lamberts Point and the tidewater coal piers.

Buchanan - Levisa - Dismal Creek ~ Norfolk & Western Branch Lines is about how a narrow-gauge logging railroad was built and then reconstructed into three standard gauge branch lines of the N&W to serve the timber and coal industry that developed along the railroad. Details are provided on the locations of each lumber mill and coal loading operation that was established on the original logging railroad and the N&W's branch lines. The fully-indexed book covers the time period 1898 to 2016, including the rise and fall of the coal industry. It includes many unpublished photographs on the BS&C and the N&W. Nine appendices add much detailed information on the BS&C and the N&W's early interest in routes into Buchanan County, Virginia.

Hardcover (first 500, softcover on additional printing), 248 pages, by *Alex Schust*
To order: <http://www.nwhs.org/commissary/books-nwhs.html>.

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Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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