

# Whistle Stop



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

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The smiles on the faces of these Watauga Valley volunteers are as bright as the skies on this sunny April day. Serving aboard our Hiwassee trip were Bob Hand, Ralph Clarke, Wayne and Lisa Davis, Lou Nelson, Jim Smallwood, and Lou Myrtle. Not pictured but serving were Norma Hand and Tom & Kati Phelps. Thanks also to Lois Tilley, Wayne Manning, and Bob Schubel for help with parking.

## *April 24<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

WVRHS&M will conduct our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will be presented by Gordon Fewster from Hendersonville, NC. Gordon is a long time railfan and model railroader. He has been a member of the NMRA since 1986 and was a member of the Rochester NRHS chapter from 1972 until he moved to Hendersonville in 1996. Entitled "Railfanning in 2016", it is an overview of the railroad locations that he visited last year. Most are continuing operations, and range from a nearly 100 year old operating steam locomotive to modern SD70ACU's, and from a trolley museum to the busy former PRR mainline over Horseshoe curve. Bring a friend and enjoy a great night of railroading.

## *Member Notes*

*by Edna Kay Carter*

Please keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Suzie Tilley, Bob Yapple, Kati Phelps, Art Devoe, Nancy Jewell, George Ritchie and Gary Price. Please 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 Edna Carter at (423) 571-3226.

Hope everyone will enjoy the beautiful spring weather that is all around us.

### **HIWASSEE TRIPS WENT OFF WITH A BANG**

Sold out train! Terrific bunch of passengers and beautiful weather proved to make our Hiwassee Gorge excursion trip a great success. April 1<sup>st</sup> was an excellent day to ride a train down by the river and through the mountains. Everyone had a wonderful time and saw some beautiful East Tennessee spring mountain scenery. Thanks to all the Watauga Valley volunteers that served on the excursion.

### **BRISTOL TRAIN STATION CELEBRATION DAY**

Watauga Valley RHS&M has been invited to set up a booth and help celebrate the "Bristol Train Station Celebration Day" on May 21<sup>st</sup>. A sign up list will be available at the April meeting for volunteers to work this event. Hope we have a good representation.

### **SUMMER EXCURSION ON THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD**

WVRHS&M's 2017 Summer Train Excursion from Bryson City to the Nantahala Gorge, NC will be held on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad on Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. Tickets will go on sale soon; a sign up sheet for car hosts will be available at the May General Membership meeting.

### **WVRHS&M / NCTM FALL AMTRAK EXCURSIONS**

WVRHS&M and NCTM are still working on details for this autumn's AMTRAK excursions, planned to operate on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Information and car host sign up forms will be available soon.

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## *PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2017*

The WVRHS&M Program Committee is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2017. Please call the office at (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in presenting a program this year. We are looking for member speakers or if you know someone that would come and present a railroad related program. And as always we're looking for DVD and slide programs.

## *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. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books!

# Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

## GENERAL

The weather has been good to the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team and there have been a lot of productive working days at the yard over the last several weeks. Looks like spring is knocking on our door and we can finally get some work done. If you would like to help out at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesday between 9am to 5pm or Saturdays 9am to 12 noon, please call the office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.org](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.org).

## ROLLING STOCK



“Clinchfield” business car (WATX 100): Is presently getting new hand brakes along with brake work so it can be moved to the North Carolina Transportation Museum for display at the National Train Day event on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The photo at left shows Ralph Clarke using some John Deere muscle to reposition the car for access to the hand brake.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Is at the Spring St. Coach Yard getting some upgrades.

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): Was used on the Easter Special at the North Carolina Transportation Museum and will be in Spencer for a couple of months.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): The car is on 611 excursion duty through June.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): Was used on the Easter Special at the North Carolina Transportation Museum [photo at right]. Will also be on the 611 excursions through June.



[left] Photographer Mike Perry, Jr. discovered three of our cars on the rear of NS 134 as it passed through Abingdon, VA on March 30. All were headed for revenue service elsewhere; the two coaches to Roanoke and the diner to Spencer.

## *In the News*

### *CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH*



The photo at right shows parking and landscaping finish work at the Depot. Displays will be up and running by mid-June; plans are to open the museum on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. If you would like to volunteer to work in the museum, please turn in the volunteer application or call (423) 753-5797.

### *FreightCar America Idling Roanoke Plant*

[*RailwayAge*] Due to a downturn in new railcar business, FreightCar America will shut down production at its Roanoke, VA facility in June; the company previously announced layoffs in February. The company plans to lay off 166 staff by April 24<sup>th</sup> and an additional 198 by the end of May, according to local media reports. The reports said state officials confirmed they received a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification of the layoffs from the company in February. The jobs to be eliminated include 87 welders, 72 fitters, six leaders and three painters. The company on Thursday posted a notice to employees at the site.

### *Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Promote Daily "Cardinal" Service*

[*Charleston Gazette-Mail* via *trains.com*] West Virginia's House of Delegates is supporting a bill that would allow the state tourism commissioner to work with other states and AMTRAK to help make the "Cardinal" a daily passenger train. The bill would also set up a special revenue account that, in the future, could be used if the tourism commissioner wanted to allocate funds from other sources to promote daily train service. The bill does not allocate any money toward daily train operations. AMTRAK representative Charlie Monte Verde told *Trains News Wire* he has no comment on the legislation, but is monitoring its progress closely.

In September 2016, a panel of West Virginia lawmakers attending a tourism conference unanimously passed a motion in favor of a daily train service. The bill, which was approved in a 95-5 vote, is now on its way to the state senate for review.

AMTRAK's "Cardinal", trains #50 and #51, is on a tri-weekly schedule operating Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday through West Virginia. It connects Chicago and New York City.

## *Legacy Chessie System / C&O Repaint*

[*Trains News Wire* via "*Lancaster Dispatcher*"] A B30-7 locomotive, formerly CSX No. 5554, emerged from CSXT's Huntington locomotive shops in Chessie System colors as C&O No. 8272. *Trains News Wire* first reported the effort when photos appeared on a Facebook page dedicated to workers and former employees of the railroad's Huntington shops. The original poster later removed the photos. Text with the post indicated that the locomotive was headed to the Lake Shore Railway Museum in North East, PA near Erie which hosts a growing collection of preserved GE-made locomotives. It is the first time a locomotive in Chessie System scheme has been painted at the Huntington shops in more than 30 years; the shop was once predominantly responsible for painting C&O and Chessie System locomotives. C&O No. 8272 was built in January 1980 and was later renumbered to CSX No. 5554. It was retired more than six years ago and placed in deadline storage at CSX's Cumberland, MD locomotive shops. It was then transported to Huntington in 2016 for cosmetic overhaul.



## *U.S. Carload Shipments Continue Stronger*

[*RailwayAge*] U.S. carload shipments of coal continued stronger while petrochemicals fell off in the week ending April 8, according to the Association of American Railroads. For that week, total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 513,022 carloads and intermodal units, up 7.1% compared with the same week in 2016. Carloads totaled 252,056 units, up 9.8%, while intermodal volume was 260,966 containers and trailers, up 4.6% from the year-ago period. Five of the 10 carload commodities tracked by the AAR posted gains including coal, up 29% to 75,078 carloads; grain, up 26% to 23,778 carloads; and nonmetallic minerals, up 7.6% to 37,582 carloads.

## *WMSR TRAINS SET TO RETURN TO FROSTBURG*

[*Trains News Wire* via "*Lancaster Dispatcher*"] Thanks to a new retaining wall, the first train to Frostburg, MD in nine months will arrive on May 6<sup>th</sup>, says John Garner, WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD's general manager. Two landslides damaged the railroad right-of-way in 2016 which curtailed service several miles short of town. Crews with Allegany County (MD) completed some \$1.5 million in repairs to stabilize a weakened rock shelf at Woodcock Hollow, about 10 miles from Cumberland. The county-owned former WESTERN MARYLAND line and the adjacent "Great Allegheny Passage" bike trail will now traverse a 350-foot-long, 28-foot-tall retaining wall. Garner says that over the next nine weeks, railroad crews will inspect the track that has been out of service, clear brush, and make additional repairs as needed. Ridership was down about 10,000 people in 2016, Garner says. He says the shortened train rides were a major reason. In addition to the Woodcock Hollow site, land slipped at another site in February 2016, where the track had been laid over mining waste. That site was repaired, but then the Woodcock Hollow slide was discovered in July. Garner says that the lack of steam power was another factor in the ridership decline. WMSR 2-8-0 No. 734 was taken out of service in April 2016 for its 1,472-day inspection. Trains have been diesel-hauled ever since.

## Upcoming Events



**APRIL 28-30:** Unveiling of historical Civil War locomotive "Texas" after year-long restoration. NCTM. For details: <http://tinyurl.com/h3jaavt>.



**APRIL 29-30:** Cass and Durbin, WV. "Spring Photo Special" events. For details: <http://tinyurl.com/z85c2u4>



**MAY 6:** "Monterey Spring Festival Trip", 216 mile, 10-hour Tennessee Central excursion. Details: <http://www.tcry.org/pdf/17-05-06.pdf>



**MAY 20:** TVRM steam trip to Summersville, GA. For details: <http://www.tvrail.com/>



**MAY 21:** Bristol Train Station Celebration Day.

**N&W 611 Excursions,** <http://fireup611.org/excursions/>

**May 6:** "The Cavalier", Lynchburg to Petersburg, VA

**May 7:** "The Cavalier", Lynchburg to Petersburg, VA

**May 27:** "The Powhatan Arrow", Roanoke to Lynchburg, VA

**May 27:** "The Pocahontas", Roanoke to Walton (Radford), VA

**May 28:** "The Powhatan Arrow", Roanoke to Lynchburg, VA

**May 28:** "The Pocahontas", Roanoke to Walton (Radford), VA

**May 29:** "The Powhatan Arrow", Roanoke to Lynchburg, VA

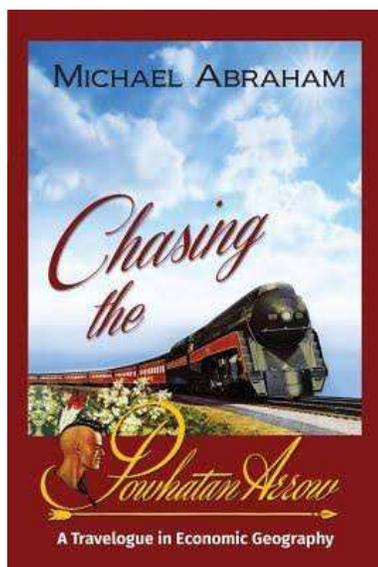
**May 29:** "The Pocahontas", Roanoke to Walton (Radford), VA.

**JUNE 20-24:** Annual NRHS Convention, Nashville, TN. Of note is the 64-mile chartered Tennessee Central Railway Museum's roundtrip from Nashville to Lebanon, TN. Registration:

<http://www.nrhs.com/content/2017-convention>



## For Your Reading Enjoyment ...



"Chasing the Powhatan Arrow" is a travelogue which follows the rail route of N&W's legendary passenger train. Author Michael Abraham, traveling by motorcycle, car, and canoe, follows the train's route as closely as possible in his narrative. A chapter is devoted to each of the 17 former stops of the "Arrow" from Norfolk (MP 0) to Cincinnati (MP 252.3). As he traveled, he gathered stories of local history, geographic phenomenon, and economic change. He then put it altogether in this enlightening, humorous, and highly readable book. 500 pages, 6x9, paperback.

To order:

<http://shop.vmt.org/chasing-the-powhatan-arrow/>

## Baltimore, MD Excursion Itinerary

### July 13-16 or 20-23, 2017

Watauga Valley RHS&M and the North Carolina Transportation Museum will operate an excursion from Charlotte, NC to Baltimore, MD on July 13-16 or July 20-23. More details about the trip will be announced very soon. If you're interested in purchasing tickets for this trip, please call the North Carolina Transportation Museum at (704) 636-2889. The cars to be used on the trip are our own "St Augustine" and "Powhatan Arrow".

#### Thursday

Depart Charlotte Amtrak Station	7:00am
Depart Salisbury Amtrak Station	7:43am
Depart Greensboro Amtrak Station	8:39am
Depart Cary Amtrak Station	10:02am
Arrive at Alexandria, VA Amtrak Station	4:30pm
Load buses for Dinner on your own in Old Town Alexandria	4:45pm
Dinner and Shopping on your own in Old Town Alexandria	5:00pm-7:30pm
Depart Old Town Alexandria for Baltimore	7:30pm
Arrive and check in to Hotel in Baltimore	9:00pm

#### Friday

Breakfast on your own (breakfast included with stay)	7:00am-8:30am
Depart hotel for the National Aquarium	8:30am
Tour of National Aquarium	9:00am-11:00am
Lunch on your Own in the Inner Harbor	11:00am-1:00pm
Self-Guided Tours through 2 Historic Ships in Baltimore	1:30pm-3:30pm
Depart USS Constellation for Hotel	3:45pm
Break at the Hotel	4:00pm-5:30pm
Depart Hotel for Dinner on your Own in Little Italy	5:30pm
Dinner on your Own in Little Italy	6:00pm-8:30pm
Depart Little Italy for hotel	8:30pm

#### Saturday

Breakfast on your own (breakfast included with stay)	7:00am-9:30am
Depart Hotel for the B&O Railroad	9:30am
Guided Tour of the B&O Railroad	10:00am-11:30am
Train Ride at the B&O Railroad	11:30pm
Depart the B&O Railroad for Lunch in Federal Hill	12:15pm
Lunch on your own in Federal Hill	12:30pm-2:00pm
Depart Federal Hill for break at hotel.	2:00pm
Break at Hotel	2:00pm-2:45pm
Depart hotel for Water Taxi to Ft. McHenry	2:45pm
Water Taxi from Fell's Point to Ft. McHenry and explore site	3:15pm-5:00pm
Dinner on your in Fell's Point	5:00pm-7:30pm
Depart Fell's Point for City Lights Cruise	7:30pm
City Lights Cruise	8:00pm-9:00pm
Depart City Lights Cruise for hotel	9:15pm

#### Sunday

Breakfast on your own (breakfast included with stay)	7:00am-8:00am
Load motor coaches with luggage and depart hotel	8:30am
Board Amtrak in Alexandria, VA	11:12am
Arrive at Cary Amtrak Station	5:03pm
Arrive at Greensboro Amtrak Station	6:32pm
Arrive at Salisbury Amtrak Station	7:24pm
Arrive at Charlotte Amtrak Station	8:12pm

## *Whistle Stop*

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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