

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432  
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Photographer Mike Pierry, Jr. captured CSX EMD SD40-3 #4047 leading the 2014 Santa Train high above Copper Creek on the ex-CLINCHFIELD Speers Ferry (VA) trestle.

## *May 22<sup>nd</sup> General Membership Meeting*

WVRHS&M will conduct our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Doug Zimmerman will present this month's program with a DVD highlighting steam locomotives in North America including UP #844, N&W #611 and #1218, MILW #261 and many others. Bring a friend along and enjoy a great night of railroading.

## *Member Notes*

*by Edna Kay Carter*

Please continue to keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Suzie Tilley, Bob Yapple, Kati Phelps, George Ritchie and Gary Price. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family member 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.

Hoping that each of you will enjoy the upcoming summer days.

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### **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>. There's still time to sign up to volunteer for booth duty – send a message to [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) or call (423) 753-5797.

### **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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## *2017 PROGRAMS REQUESTED*

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!

### *VOLUNTEERS NEEDED*

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

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

*by Jim Magill*

### ROLLING STOCK

“*Clinchfield*” business car (WATX 100): At the North Carolina Transportation Museum on display.



[Photos above, left to right] The WVRHS&M Mechanical Crew waiting on NS to pickup WATX 100; NS Crew picking WATX 100 up in Johnson City; WATX 100 at the end of Train 134 going through Piney Flats TN.

“*Crescent Harbor*” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): In storage at the Coach Yard having its A/C upgraded as well as other upgrades.

“*Moultrie*” diner (WATX 400): In operation at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“*Powhatan Arrow*” coach (WATX 539): Serving on the Norfolk Southern Steam Program up north.

“*St Augustine*” coach (WATX 500): Serving on the Norfolk Southern Steam Program up north.

### *Headed Up North?*

The report above mentioned WATX 500 and 539 headed up north. What's that all about? From the following press release: This summer, a restored 1940's-era steam locomotive will operate *The Joliet Rocket*, a high-speed, passenger train excursion between Joliet and Chicago, Illinois for tourists, railroad fans and the general public alike. On June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, steam locomotive #765 will pull 2 roundtrip excursions each day from the Joliet Transportation Center to a private event at LaSalle Street Station, where passengers will be treated to a 2-hour layover featuring live music, entertainment, reenactors, vintage cocktails, appetizers and awards for best dressed attendees. The trips will each feature a scheduled photo-runby.

Sponsored by the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, Inc. (FWRHS) in a partnership with Metra, *The Joliet Rocket* will offer economy coach and deluxe coach seating options. First class and dome car amenities may also be offered. Special limited Railfan Event Passes will permit photographers to join the event during the layover and support the operation of #765 from afar. Tickets and info: <http://excursions.fortwaynerailroad.org/>.

## *In the News*

### *CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH*

The Chuckey Depot / Museum at Jonesborough has been a team effort of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, the Heritage Alliance and the Town of Jonesborough. When it was learned in 2010 that the depot owners were required to tear the building down due to NORFOLK SOUTHERN needing the property, Watauga Valley stepped in, got the Town of Jonesborough involved, and saved the depot. It was taken apart piece by piece and stored in trailers for about three years. In 2015, the town started reassembling the depot at its current location on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

This prolonged effort at historic railroad restoration will reach its rewarding climax on June 29, 2017 when the depot will open to the public at 11 am during Jonesborough Days. Everyone is invited to attend the Grand Opening. If you volunteered to be a host at the depot during this event, you will be contacted soon with details concerning your host duties.

Moving forward, plans call for the museum within the depot to be opened in October; it promises to be one of the best railroad museums in the Tri Cities.

### *NRHS Conventions*

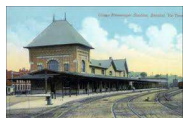
[Reported by “Interchange”, Baltimore NRHS] Registrations for the 2017 NRHS convention in Nashville continue, with currently just under 200 registrants. The convention hotel is changing from Holiday Inn to Hilton ownership. There were 3 options for a 2018 convention, but due to some logistical issues with two of the venues, the NRHS Board voted to pursue a late August convention in the Cass, WV area with the hotel being at the Snowshoe Resort. The May 2019 convention plans for a venue centered on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary Golden Spike celebration at Promontory, UT continue to be developed.

### *#1309 Update*

[“Automatic Block”, Western Maryland NRHS] Over the past several months “Whistle Stop” has been reporting on the progress of the restoration of ex-C&O articulated steam locomotive #1309. The major question is: when will the restored steam locomotive begin operating? WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD officials now say that the 2-6-6-2 engine will not debut on July 1 as planned, but more likely in September. After the tubes have been inserted into the boiler, hydrostatic tests need to be performed, the twin sets of driving wheels placed under the boiler; and then all appliances connected. A completely new engine cab is being built which will be lined with tongue-and-groove Douglas fir.

According to Trains News Wire, while the railroad has spent \$800,000 of its own money to push forward restoration of the giant articulated locomotive, promised reimbursements from the State of Maryland have been slow in coming. Railroad workers and contractor Diversified Rail Services stopped all restoration work in early March due to the funding setback. The railroad was also forced to furlough some workers due to a shortage in cash flow. Happily, on May 10<sup>th</sup> it was reported that the fiduciary issue has been resolved and work has resumed (see photos on page 7).

## Upcoming Events



**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 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>

### *WVRHS&M Field Trip to Big South Fork Scenic Railway*



Watauga Valley members and guests are invited to take a special motor coach / train trip to the BIG SOUTH FORK SCENIC RAILWAY in Stearns, KY on Saturday, June 24, 2017 where we will ride over the historic route of the KENTUCKY & TENNESSEE RAILWAY on a three hour, 14 mile round-trip into the Daniel Boone National Forest and Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area. The trip is full of spectacular scenic vistas, lush vegetation, and mountain streams as it descends 600 feet into the

gorge before stopping at the Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp, a National Park Service outdoor interpretive site. You will also have admission to the McCreary County Museum in Stearns. Cost is \$62.00 per person (Includes transportation round trip and train ticket).

#### *Schedule*

Leave Johnson City, TN 6:00 am  
 Depart on train at 11:00 am  
 Depart Stearns, KY 2:30 pm

Arrive Stearns, KY 10:00 am  
 Arrive back on train 2:00 pm  
 Arrive Johnson City, TN 7:15 pm

Get your tickets now - only 32 seats available for this trip. Send check only, payable to: Nick White, 3404 Spring Heather Court, Willow Spring, NC 27592. PLEASE NOTE: NO REFUNDS FOR ANY REASON! For questions, call Nick White at (276) 685-2386.

## From the Vault ...



[Wayne Manning Collection] The SOUTHERN RAILROAD's Gate City, VA depot from a 1963 post card. The structure was situated along the original route of the VIRGINIA AND SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY, incorporated in 1908 to haul coal from Inman, VA to Bristol (an interesting choice of names since it headed southeast\*\*). The V&SW railroad also operated a passenger train along this route through the Natural Tunnel in Scott County. The V&SW was leased to the SOUTHERN RAILWAY in 1916, which eventually extended the road southeast to Mountain City, TN. A search on Google Maps reveals that the depot no longer exists. The line is still in use, although traffic has decreased due to the decline of the area's coal industry.

\*\* The V&SW was the successor to the V&SE, incorporated in 1904.

## Railroad Trivia ...



The term "gauntlet track" surfaced within interesting banter in a railfan discussion list. As defined by *wikipedia*, gauntlet track is an arrangement in which railway tracks run parallel on a single track bed and are interlaced (i.e., overlapped) such that only one pair of rails may be used at a time. Since this requires only slightly more width than a single track, all rails can be carried on the same cross-ties. Trains run on the discrete pair of rails appropriate to their direction, track gauge or loading gauge. Although

limited, gauntlet tracks were used in the US, most notably when feeding trains through tunnels. The photo above shows one such arrangement in Germany. Now there's a challenge for you modelers!

## Photo Gallery ...

"Blue Ridge Dispatcher" Editor Garland Harper was at the north end of the James River trestle near Lynchburg, VA on April 10<sup>th</sup> when the NORFOLK SOUTHERN office car special came through on its way to the 2017 Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, GA. At point is F9A #4270. [Photo used with permission.]



WVRHS&M President Mike Tilley captured the massive effort underway at WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD's Ridgeway, WV shops in the restoration of 217-ton ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 articulated locomotive #1309. For more information on #1309's progress, go to <https://www.wmsr.com/restoring-1309/>.

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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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