

Whistle Stop



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

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At last month's meeting Lou Myrtle treated us to a video of action on the STRASBURG RAILROAD, featuring ex-N&W 4-8-0 #475. As a follow up, Whistle Stop is offering a view of the #475 dressed up in N&W livery, recreating a consist on the N&W's Blacksburg Branch, the "Huckleberry", performing at the N&W Historical Society's Annual Convention. [Photo copyright Jeff Lisowski; used with permission.]

August 28th General Membership Meeting

WVRHS&M will conduct our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, August 28th, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN.

This month's program, presented by Jerry Harris, will be on CSX and NS through the border states linking the North and South. Jerry has a great program which includes the CLINCHFIELD Copper Creek Bridge and NORFOLK SOUTHERN Natural Tunnel. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your fellow railfans.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Our sympathy is extended to Mike, Lois and Patrick Tilley in the loss of their mother Suzie Tilley. Sympathy is also sent to Judy Anderson in the loss of her father.

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Bob Yapple, Kati Phelps, Nancy Jewell, George Ritchie, Gary Price and Gail Zimmerman. 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 Edna Carter at 423-571-3226.

Hope everyone has had a good summer.

Welcome aboard, new members!

Phillip Babb Chuckey, TN
Sharon N. Eaton Bristol, VA
Ruston Fannon Duffield, VA
Keith & Helen Grindstaff Bristol, TN

Rebecca Hilton Johnson City, TN
Gary & Sandy Meyer Jonesborough, TN
Ben Parrish Jonesborough, TN
Jim Sutterlin Johnson City, TN

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN SUMMER TRAIN EXCURSION A BIG SUCCESS

We had a very fast sell out of our Summer 2017 excursion on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD. GSMR and WVRHS&M teamed up to put the largest excursion trains every run on the GSMR. We had 10 bus loads going down this year with 535 passengers. The train consisted of 16 cars pulled by three locomotives. Excellent weather stayed with us all most of the day. GSMR and WVRHS&M wants to thank our hosts who helped make this a pleasurable event for all on the buses and train.

CHUCKEY DEPOT FUNDRAISER ON THE MOULTRIE DINING CAR

The Chuckey Depot fundraiser event on our dining car *Moultrie* was a big success. Almost all of the dinner seatings were sold out except a few at lunch. We had a lot of happy people and some delicious food served to them. *Crescent Harbor* served as a holding car.

Fall Excursion

As of press time, the trip committee is still working on several excursion possibilities for the fall season. Any new information or announcements will be made at the August General Membership Meeting.

UNIFORMS AVAILABLE

Order forms for WVRHS&M uniforms were available in the July *Whistle Stop*. If you need a uniform or name badge, please look at the last page of that newsletter. Mail your completed form and check (no cash, please) to WVRHS&M, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432 or bring to a General Membership meeting.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

The Clinchfield Signal has been restored and is awaiting movement to the Chuckey Depot Museum. Terry Worley will be wiring the signal to work at the depot once installed.

If you would like to volunteer at the Spring St. Coach Yard on Tuesdays or Saturdays, please call 423-753-5797 or email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. There are projects for everyone, hope to hear from you.

ROLLING STOCK

"Clinchfield" business car (WATX 100): On display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum round house.

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Ready to go for next assignment on the road.

"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400): 400 Moultrie Diner –Is getting a new brake system 26 C which will be installed the week of 8/21. Also installing some replacement windows in dining room.

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539): At the coach yard getting upgrades on its diesel generator and other items.

"St Augustine" coach (WATX 500): At the yard also getting some upgrades.

Saluda Grade Visit

Curious about its condition, your editor recently explored the foot of the (in?) famous Saluda Grade on the ex-SOUTHERN Carolina Division at Melrose, NC. While the line has not been officially abandoned (it was mothballed in 2001), as evidenced by the photos below it is difficult to foresee trains ever climbing this awesome 4.7% maximum grade again; it's even harder to imagine the action that this line once witnessed. Condition at the crest of the grade and rails in the town of Saluda (and northward), while rails are rusting, is in fairly decent shape. Crossing signal lights have been covered but not removed. [Lower left and right: beginning of northbound grade; center looks south at NB approach.] Travel note: a visit to the rail museum in town is highly recommended; a "Z" scale model diorama of the entire grade offers an excellent perspective. There's also a lot of information on the grade's origins as well.



In the News

CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM at JONESBOROUGH

Progress is going well on the restoration of the depot. The exterior is about 100 % complete. The only thing left is getting the exhibits on display; plans at the last meeting are to have the museum opening date on Monday, October 2, 2017. If you would like to add your name to volunteer at the museum on certain days, please call 423-753-5797 and leave a message. Everyone is welcome to drive by and see the exterior. Directions, turn off of Jackson Ave at Ace Hardware onto Second Ave. cross Main St. till you come to the railroad crossing, then turn right.

RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE to BEGIN in ROANOKE

ROANOKE, Va. (Roanoke Times News) – AMTRAK service is coming to Roanoke this fall. Local news media outlets report that a grand opening event will be held on Oct. 30 after the arrival of the first train. Officials say AMTRAK will start its daily passenger service on Oct 31. It's the result of a project extending passenger rail service between Lynchburg and Roanoke that will connect Roanoke passengers to Washington and other cities along the Northeast Corridor. It's the first time Roanoke will have intercity passenger rail service in four decades. A train will reach town about noon Oct. 30 for a ribbon cutting-type event, said Kelsey Webb, a spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The following day, a Tuesday, passenger service to and from Roanoke will begin anew after a 38-year hiatus. AMTRAK has said that one train will leave the city in the morning and return at night. The exact travel times and ticket prices are unknown. Only when AMTRAK announces further details will riders know exact travel times and ticket prices.

NS PASSENGER CAR AUCTION



[WDBJ7, Roanoke, VA; photo by Joe Dashiell] Five NORFOLK SOUTHERN passenger cars that were used in local excursions have been sold. The cars were auctioned Thursday morning along with more than 60 diesel locomotives. The excursion coaches went to the three buyers, including a scenic railroad in New York State, a tour company in Alaska and the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Holland America/Princess Tours,(2) Adirondack Scenic,(2) and NCTM (1) were the winning bidders. The winning

bids were higher than expected, averaging around \$200,000 for a single rail car, ranging from \$160,000 to \$275,000, leading to speculation of an "auction fever" Epidemic. The sale has raised concern within the railfan community about the future of the NS Steam Program.



NS CLOSING ITS CENTRAL DIVISION HEADQUARTERS in KNOXVILLE

[WBIR, Knoxville] NORFOLK SOUTHERN is closing its Central Division headquarters in Knoxville and moving 50 jobs from that office to other locations. The railway transportation company said in a news release the jobs will move to three surrounding divisions in Birmingham, Alabama; Decatur, Illinois; and Fort Wayne, Indiana. The company said the change will "enhance customer service and improve operating efficiencies."

The change will take effect around Nov. 1, and will affect about 50 employees who currently work at the Knoxville headquarters in management, dispatching and clerical positions, the company said. Dispatchers will be offered a transfer to one of the three other divisions, or will be able to apply for other vacancies within the company.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN said the current yard and field operations in Knoxville will not be affected. The A-Line between Bristol, VA and Knoxville and the TC-Line between Andover, VA and Bulls Gap, TN will operate under the Pocahontas Division in Roanoke, VA. After the change, NORFOLK SOUTHERN will still have about 250 employees in Knoxville.



CSX to End Pusher Service

[TRAINS News Wire] CSX Transportation is in the early stages of getting rid of locomotive pusher operations system wide. The news was first reported by United Transportation Union Local 1162 through the labor group's Facebook page on July 14. "Our office is being informed that the carrier has made the decision today to cut off all the pusher assignments on our property," read the union's post. Local 1162 represents CSX railroaders on the railroad's former Clinchfield Railroad in eastern Tennessee.

With the absence of pushers, local railroad managers are instructing train crews to double the hill or use the motive power of other trains in the area to assist. Doubling a hill is an operational practice that divides a single train into multiple cuts, as opposed to taking the entire train across a grade at one time. Ideally, trains would have sufficient head-end power to tackle mountainous routes without the need for additional rear-end locomotives.

On routes with less rail traffic than primary corridors, such as the C&O in West Virginia, pusher jobs may be perceived to management as insufficient. On former B&O territories in Maryland, such as Cumberland, pusher locomotives actually serve a broader purpose one employee says.

Trains News Wire asked CSX to respond to reports about pusher assignments. "As part of an ongoing comprehensive review of company operations, CSX continues to make changes across its network, including changes to operating rules, to improve safety, efficiency and service to customers," CSX representative Rob Doolittle says. "As these operational changes are made, CSX managers are communicating with employees and any other stakeholders who may be impacted to implement changes safely and effectively." [Full article available to subscribers.]

Photo Gallery

The weather definitely cooperated for the Railroad Heritage Alliance's annual picnic in Asheville, NC on August 5th. Besides perfect weather, attendees were treated to good food, wonderful conversation and two fun-filled rides over the CRAGGY MOUNTAIN LINE, a tourist line outside the city that traces the route of an early 20th century trolley line. To learn more about the line, go to <http://craggymountainline.com>.



Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (aka Tom & Kati Phelps) opted out of their colorful Christmas garb for cooler clothing. Great weather but not for wool.



NRHS President Al Weber addresses attendees on the organization's status. High on his list of priorities: membership recruitment.



CRAGGY MOUNTAIN LINES President Rocky Hollifield poses in front of the speeder and car which carried attendees up Beaverdam Creek to inspect equipment at CML's yard off Merrimon Avenue in Woodfin (Asheville).



The CML crew "fired-up" their ALCO S3 No. 7 to the delight of attendees. The former Pennsy switcher was acquired by CML in 2012 from the Alexander (NC) NRHS chapter.

GSMR Summer Excursion

Here's just a few photos that captured the fun and excitement of our summer rail excursion over the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD. To view more photos, go to our facebook page (search for "Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum").



Speaking of excursions ...



Alf Peoples sends along these two shots of our April 1984 excursion to Marion, NC over the former CLINCHFIELD.

Upcoming Events



AUGUST 26-27: "Railroad Heritage Weekend" at TWEETSIE RAILROAD. For more information, see <https://tweetsie.com/special-events/railroad-heritage-weekend/>



SEPTEMBER 1-2: "Fire Up 611 Weekend" at VMT, Roanoke. See <http://www.vmt.org/events/>



SEPTEMBER 2 AND 16: "Summerville Steam Special", TVRM, Chattanooga. See <http://www.tvrail.com/events-exhibits/rides/summerville-steam-special>



SEPTEMBER 1-4, 8-10: Steam powered trips on GSMR. See <http://www.gsmr.com/train-schedule#.WYc-jFGGO71>



SEPTEMBER 16-17, 23-24: "Steam in the Valley", ex-NKP #765. Akron, OH. <https://www.cvsr.com/take-the-train/steam-in-the-valley/>

Railroad Day at Old Fort, NC

Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort, NC, will host its annual Railroad Day event on Saturday, Sept. 16th, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., both on the museum's grounds and at the old SOUTHERN RAILWAY depot on Old Fort's Main Street. Live bands, food vendors, antique cars, exhibits, artists & crafters, children's games, and other activities will be at the museum, located only two blocks from the depot. A

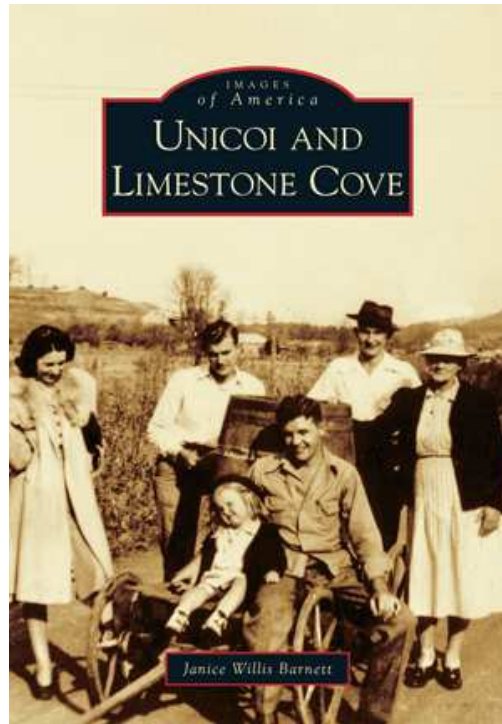
trolley with local railroad historians aboard will be leaving from the depot to make round trips to the Andrews Geyser. Authors of rail-themed books will be available to sign and sell their books at tables that will be set up in the depot. Toilet facilities are available inside the depot.



#1309 Photo Charters Postponed

Last month *Whistle Stop* reported on the tentatively scheduled photo charters scheduled for this November featuring restored ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309 at the WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD. However, restoration has been set back yet again after contractors found corrosion pits on the locomotive's axles. They will have to be turned on a lathe, which means wheel boxes and crank pins will have to be rebuilt as well. Adding to the problem is that only one company in the eastern United States, located in Tennessee, is authorized to work on steam locomotives and that repairs must be completed to Federal Railroad Administration standards. Because of these issues, event sponsors WMSR and *Trains Magazine* have announced that the photo charters have been postponed until 2018.

For Your Reading Enjoyment ...



Surrounded by the Cherokee National Forest's blue mountain ranges, Unicoi and Limestone Cove are part of America's first western frontier. From their beginnings in the famed Watauga and Nolichucky settlements of the 1770s until today, Unicoi and Limestone Cove's history has reflected the boom times, depressions, and wars of the Appalachian region and the nation. Bell Cemetery in Limestone Cove is still a reminder of the Civil War in northeastern Tennessee. Each year, grounds near Davis Springs provide the stage for the reenactment of a Confederate ambush and massacre of Union recruits at the home of Dr. David Bell in 1863. The streets in the old residential section of Unicoi are a reminder of the model town planned by speculators, who came to Unicoi and Limestone Cove during the industrial boom of the late 1880s, eager to purchase the area's timber and mineral-rich land. Images of America: Unicoi and Limestone Cove **contains rare images of Unicoi during this time, including photographs of the train and narrow-gauge railroad built to haul timber from Limestone Cove and Unaka Mountain.**

Paperback. \$21.99. Ordering is through your local bookstore or on-line.

A Short Line Railroad Guide To U.S. Class III Carriers

Check out <http://www.american-rails.com/short-line-railroad-guide.html>

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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