

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

Volume 39 No. 7

July 2019



TRAINS magazine editor Jim Wrinn captured this staged 2017 photo op, organized in conjunction with that year's "Santa Train", in front of Kingsport's ex-CLINCHFIELD station. You can just see our CRR 100 business car coupled behind ex-CRR F7 (upgraded from F3au) #800. Current news about the #800 can be found on page 5.

June 24th General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, June 24th, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program will be provided by Gary Street. It is on UNION PACIFIC Steam locomotives in the 1950s!

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson

Please continue to remember the Douglas family in the loss of their loved one. Keep the following in your thoughts as they deal with various health concerns. They are Nancy Jewel, Gary Price, George Ritchie, Sharon Eaton, Bob Mushet and Fred Phofl and his wife. 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 number is 423-753-5797 or call Edna Carter at 423-571-4612.

We would like to welcome new members Justin and Amy Collins and Donald Brewer.

Hope everyone is having a good summer.

WVRHS&M News

GSMR HOST TRAINING

All hosts who volunteered to help on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD excursion trains at the last membership meeting will need to attend the GSMR Safety Meeting on August 26 at 5:45 pm at the Johnson City Public Library prior to our regular membership meeting.

EXCURSION HOSTS NEEDED FOR SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER GSMR TRIPS

We are still in need of volunteer hosts to help on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD excursion trains on either Sept 15th or Nov 3rd trips. This is your chance for a great train ride and an enjoyable day. Please call Mike Tilley at (423) 335-1100 if you can help out.

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 chapter office at 423-753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good works. We have plenty of room to add more books!

GET THE WHISTLE STOP IN BEAUTIFUL COLOR VIA E-MAIL

If you're receiving the Whistle Stop in hard copy you are missing out on the beautiful colors each month. Whistle Stop is being offered to all members in e-mail copy which is so much more detailed and colorful. Also, you will receive it about week in advance than the mail out hard copy. If you interested in changing out to the e-mail copy, please call the WATV office at 423-753-5797.

WVRHS&M Rail Excursions

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN SUMMER TRAIN EXCURSION SOLD OUT

We had a very fast sell out on our 2019 excursions on the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD. We have 10 bus loads full of passengers for each of the four trips.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill

We're in need of volunteers to work at the Spring Street Coach Yard every Tuesday from 9 am to 5 pm. If you want to get involved in our great projects, please call (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): 539 is headed back to Jonesborough from a 6-month lease out on the road. Several upgrades will be done on the car.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): 2351 is at the Jonesborough Coach Yard for upgrades.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): 500 is at North Carolina Transportation Museum.

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

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): Work on major upgrades to the interior of the car continues. In the photos below, we see Mike Dowdy, Cline Knowles and Jim Sutterlin working on the car's ceiling. At lower right, local contractor Service Pro can be seen preparing to clean the car's a/c ductwork.



For Your Viewing Pleasure ...

UNION PACIFIC recently harnessed their 4-8-8-4 “Big Boy” #4014 and 4-8-4 #844 together for some spectacular railroading out west. Here's a video of that doubleheader working really hard uphill! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75Gz-U25HdY>.

Chuckey Depot and Rail Museum

Things at the Chuckey Depot / Museum have been very busy for the month of June. We had over 185 volunteer host hours during the month assisting large crowds coming through the museum. A new Clinchfield Railroad Artifact Theme will be added in August. If you would like volunteer at the museum, please call (423) 753-5797. Thanks to all the WVRHS&M members who make this happen with your volunteer hours.

CRUISE-IN AT THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

Jonesborough Classic Car Cruise-In has been a big success so far this year. We have been averaging around 50 cars per event and around 300 attendees. The Cruise-In is held every third Saturday 5 pm to 8 pm at the Chuckey Depot. Live Music, Delicious Food and good family fun. Mark your calendar as follows for future events: July 20; August 17; September 21; and October 19. Come out and see some beautiful cars, Chuckey Depot exhibits, live music, delicious food – good family fun!



Pictured above is the June 19th Cruise-In event at the depot. Classic cars and trains. What more could you ask for?

WEB CAM UP AND RUNNING

Go on line and see the Watauga Valley Virtual Rail Cams at the Chuckey Depot. It is live and you can view trains back for 12 hours by moving the red bar at bottom of page. We also have a live radio feed of the trains and dispatchers talking. The screenshot at right is just a sample of the action you can view from afar. To access the webcam, visit our home page at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org> and click on the link that says "LIVE WEBCAM AND RAILROAD RADIO".



In the News ...

Clinchfield No. 800 Will Lead C&O 2716 to Restoration

[Reprinted from *TRAINS* magazine. Article by Chris Anderson]

RAVENNA, Ky. — The move of a historic steam engine this summer across Central Kentucky will now be a reunion 40 years in the making between two famed locomotives.

Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp., announced today that Clinchfield Railroad F7 No. 800 will lead Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 Kanawha No. 2716 as the steam locomotive is towed from Kentucky Railway Museum in New Haven, Ky., to its new home at Kentucky Steam's Ravenna, Ky., headquarters in July. The use of No. 800 to move No. 2716 harkens back to the last time the two locomotives were paired together. In 1979, CRR Fs Nos. 200 and 800 pulled No. 2716 to Marion, N.C., for a restoration project that never came to pass. "This is a rare opportunity at a second chance," Kentucky Steam President Chris Campbell said. The steam locomotive will be restored to operation at Ravenna.



The move, scheduled for July 26-28, will be a combined effort of CSX Transportation, RJ Corman Railroad Group, Kentucky Steam and Kentucky Railway Museum. The special train will travel through Louisville, Midway, Frankfort, Lexington, and Winchester en route to Ravenna.

As part of the 2716's move, Kentucky Steam and Kentucky Railway Museum will hold a 2.5-hour, 24-mile round trip public excursion, dubbed the "Heritage Highball," as part of the locomotive's send off. Riders on the excursion train will follow behind Nos. 800 and 2716 as they travel toward Lebanon Junction where KRM connects with CSX's Mainline Subdivision. At the junction, the historic locomotives will uncouple from the excursion and continue on over CSX toward Louisville while the excursion returns back to the museum.

As part of Kentucky Steam's announcement about No. 800, the group also revealed more ticketing information, including the prices and availability for cab ride tickets for both the 2716 and the 800, during the excursion toward Lebanon. Seats in No. 2716's cab start at \$1,000 for the jump seat, with two seats being available, and go up to \$2,716 for the engineer or fireman's seats, limit of one each. Cab rides in No. 800 will be \$800 per ticket, with a limit of two.

Kentucky Steam's recently restored cabooses, C&O 3203, will also be part of the consist for the move and tickets are available for the cabooses, as well. General seats start at \$500 with a limit of eight tickets available, and cupola seats are \$770 with two seats available.

Coach seats for the excursion will be \$43 each, with approximately 200 seats anticipated to be available in KRM coaches. All tickets go on sale Thursday at 9 a.m. EST.

In 1979, No. 2716's restoration came to a stop after a management shakeup at the Clinchfield, and the engine was returned to Kentucky Railway Museum. Southern Railway leased it for excursions.

Charlie Poling, museum director at Southern Appalachia Railway Museum and home to No. 800, complimented CSX for allowing No. 800 to lead the move of No. 2716. "SARM could not ask for a better partner in preservation than CSX Transportation," Poling said. "Their ongoing commitment to preserving their proud corporate heritage is to be commended. Clinchfield 800 is a shining example of this commitment."

No. 800 last led a train on CSX trackage when it commanded the 2017 Santa Train, commemorating the 75th running of train through Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee. "SARM was honored and humbled to be asked to participate in the 75th anniversary Santa Train and is again honored to be involved in C&O 2716's trip to a new home in Ravenna," Poling said.

Since leading the 75th Santa Train, No. 800 has been on lease to the Royal Palm Railway in Florida, operating three days per week in passenger service on the tourist rail line.

For more information and ticketing, visit <https://www.kentuckysteam.org>.

Bristol, VA AMTRAK Update

[Reprinted from Roanoke NRHS "Turntable Times"] A study commissioned by Bristol and others to possibly bring passenger rail service along the Roanoke-Bristol NS line has been completed with an estimated ridership of 23,600 from Bristol. However, in a *Bristol Herald Courier* article reprinted by *The Roanoke Times* on May 25, 2019, it is pointed out that there are two significant obstacles to any plans for the service to even to begin moving forward. One is Norfolk Southern refusing to do a Christiansburg study at this time that they require for any new rail passenger service, and the other is the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, along with Washington, DC, focusing on building a second Potomac River bridge next to the present CSX-owned Long Bridge that connects Virginia with the District of Columbia. Planning work is in progress for the new bridge but it will be several years before it can be built, and the current bridge is at capacity.

So, bottom line, don't expect AMTRAK service west of Roanoke anytime soon.

Upcoming Railfan Events



JUL 20: Natural Tunnel (VA) State Park annual “*Railroad Days*”. A rare opportunity to walk the tunnel (both sides) and see a NORFOLK SOUTHERN engine up close.



JUL 31 – AUG 3: Appalachia, VA “*Railroad and Coal Days*”.



AUG 24-25: Tweetsie Railroad’s “*Railroad Heritage Weekend*”.



SEPT 15: GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. **SOLD OUT!**



SEPT, OCT various dates: N&W 611 visits Strasburg Railroad. See <https://tinyurl.com/y4ba6nxj>



NOV 3: GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. **SOLD OUT!**

Whistle Truck Schedule

As most of you know the WVRHS&M Whistle Truck is now back home and back in action, bringing SOUNDS FROM THE PAST. It recently showed at the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum for their *Rail Days*. Per Bill Haskins, director of the museum, many people lined up to blow the whistles. The upcoming schedule for the Whistle Truck is as follows: June 29 – Spartanburg, SC Train Station; August 3 – *Appalachia, VA Railroad and Coal Days*.

Revised C&O #1309 Schedule / Track Issues

Despite postponement of its inaugural run, the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad is now selling tickets on their web site for their “*Allegany Mountain Express*” powered by ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309. The inaugural run is now scheduled for Friday, August 2nd. During that month and September trains will run Friday - Sunday. A very full schedule is planned for leaf peeping season. Check out <https://wmsr.com/full-schedule/>. *Whistle Stop* will continue to keep readers updated should this schedule change.

[From “*The Automatic Block*”, Western Maryland NRHS] In addition to the postponement of the return of engine #1309, dubbed *Mountain Thunder*, Allegany County [MD] received more bad news regarding the condition of the WMSR’s rail lines which span from Cumberland to the Frostburg Depot. “The track itself is the property of Allegany County,” said Brandon Butler, County Administrator. “With that, there is some TLC (tender loving care) needed for the rails. We are looking at the reports. We are looking at about 1,200 ties that look like they need replacement as soon as possible.”

Butler said engine No. 1309, billed as the largest articulated steam locomotive east of the Mississippi River, adds a significant increase in weight for the train. “The steam engine is larger and heavier than the current locomotive that runs up and down those tracks,” said Butler. Officials said the cost will be roughly \$150,000 for 1,200 ties, spikes, plates, weed spraying and inspections. “We also have some preventative weed spraying which needs to take place, which is \$26,000, but that has come in lower than expected” said Butler. “There is also an issue of a bridge inspection that is in order of about \$25,000. All in all, you are looking at spending \$150,000.

Megan's Manifest

by Megan Kegley



To start this month's *Manifest* off, I will share one of my more popular photos. As several of you heard, the newly painted CSX units ended up running down the Clinchfield on a Q693. A little birdy flew by and told me that the CSX 911 (red) and the CSX 1776 (camo/blue) were going to be trailing (meaning 3&4 out) on the Q693 to run down the Clinchfield. The night before I was checking to see where the Q693 was in terms of location; I then decided to wake up at 0400 the

next morning to check to see where they were. I woke up and got my displays running on my computer and did some checking on location elsewhere. They were at the north end of Kermit waiting on a signal to enter into Kingsport. I left my house by 6 and was heading over to Kingsport to meet up with some buddies of mine that were going to chase the units south. To make a long story short, the birdy told me they may swap into the lead positions despite the PTC issues with the units. As they backed into Kingsport toward the Kingsport Holdout, the crew performed some switching around and the 911 came out leading! Chris Calton and I were the first few people to get photos of them leading a freight train since they had recently been painted! We were thrilled! I ended up chasing these units all the way to Spruce Pine, NC that day. LOL! It was worth it to wake up at 0400 for this! The photo above was taken out at Fordtown just south of Kingsport as the fog was beginning to lift.

On a rainy note, I ended up going to the Carolinas for the weekend to dance with my team and to spend time with friends. On Saturday morning June 8th I got up early and went to the Craggy Mountain Line over in Woodfin, NC with a friend of mine. We took his motorcar out and were doing a few things around the grounds when the bottom fell out of the sky around lunch time. It was a complete wash out that day. As we left the Craggy and started over to Maggie Valley, we saw NS P89 from the Interstate moving along and we made a detour to get some photos. Even though it was pouring rain and crappy weather I wanted to get some photos of some sort of trains in the area while I was in town, rain or shine. LOL. I'm pleased to have photos of these old engines.



Who knows how much longer they will be around? Above is NS P89 picking up cars at Silverline Plastics plant in Asheville, NC with a GP60 first and a GP59 second.



On June 9th, I met up with two of my railroad friends and we went after the Blue Ridge Southern before I left out of town. Earlier that morning we had found BLU T59 over in Waynesville picking up cars at the Giles plant. (YES, ITS SUPPOSED TO BE BLU AND **NOT** BLUE, THAT'S HOW THEY ID THEM.) Once again, it was a wet and rainy day but we went out and about anyways. We left Waynesville and rode over to Canton to see if BLU T31 had left yet. We got there just in

time! We waited maybe 20 minutes for the T31 to leave and make its way toward Asheville. I always love to take photos of Blue Ridge Southern! I find new spots each time I am down to add to my list!

Once again on June 9th, after leaving North Carolina to come home, I decided I was going to stop by the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum since I always go home via I40/I81. I had absolutely no idea about the train at right when I left Waynesville. I just had lucky timing! I pulled in at the Museum and got out of my vehicle and went inside and Bill stopped me and said "Turn around and go to Kite! The Conrail is out there leading a 163 that's about to leave!" I said "okay thank you sir!". Just as Bill said, I went out to Kite to get the 163 leaving with the NS Conrail Heritage unit in the lead. I haven't gotten pics of the Conrail so this knocked another one off my list!



To finish this month's *Manifest*, on June 9th I captured CSX U090-08 going up the Appalachia District, Loyal, KY bound. I left the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum around 4 pm and came on back home. I was planning on going to Gate City to get some food before going to the house. As soon as I reached the TN/VA state line in Weber City, I heard a train talking on the scanner. I couldn't make

anything out much. I was like "oh, well, it's probably the local down at Yuma switching." As I came through Weber City, I saw the CSX hoppers moving and I was like "hmm, wonder how far ahead the engines are?" I saw that I could get ahead of them in Gate City, so that is exactly where I went since I was going that way anyhow. My being able to get this train caused me to get photos of trains in 3 different states in one day! Totally unplanned!!! You can say that I covered some ground on June 9, 2019!!!

Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432
whistlestop.editor@gmail.com

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the organization members, officers or directors. Items of interest are welcome and will be credited to the author; however, because of space constraints, all submissions are subject to editing. Permission to reprint *Whistle Stop* articles with the exception of photographs is granted if proper credit is given. Reuse of photographs must receive permission by the editor and the photographer.



**Watauga Valley RHS & Museum
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL