

Whistle Stop



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

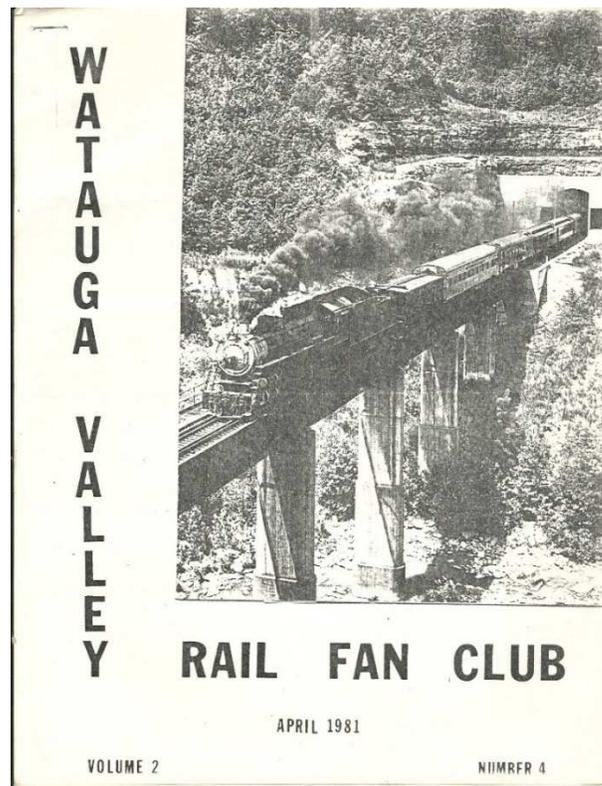
www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

Volume 41 No. 12

December 2021



This past April we reached a 40-year milestone as a nationally-recognized railfan organization (first as an NRHS chapter and then, in addition, as a historical society), transitioning from our humble beginning as a group of railfans meeting to share that common interest. In 1981 there were no excursions, no coach yard and railroad cars, no museum, no whistle truck. The newsletter, yet to be named, was photocopied and distributed by US mail. In December we will celebrate the remarkable progress we've made over these past 40 years.

November 22nd General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, November 22nd, 2021 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will be presented by Gary Price on the last run of the Pocahontas with NKP #759. We will also be discussing our 2022 train excursions. Note that we are hoping to get back into busing passengers out of Johnson City and Asheville. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great program.

Member Notes

By Edna Kay Carter

Please keep Scott Wise and his family in your thoughts and prayers in the recent loss of his father, Hugh Wise. Hugh and Linda were longtime members of the club and worked on several of the excursions over the years. Remember all the others who have lost loved ones this year.

Continue to keep Nancy Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Gary Price, Jack Maloney and Lois Tilley in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. 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 number is 423-753-5797 or call Edna Carter at 423-571-4612.

Welcome to our newest members Jayce Darsch and David & Gina Billings. Look forward to working with you and seeing you at the monthly meetings.

Fall is here and hope everyone is enjoying the colors the season has to offer.

Everyone stay safe and healthy. Hope all of you have a good Thanksgiving.

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING & MEAL

December 11th, 2021

DEPOT ROOM AT FRANKLIN COMMONS (FOOD CITY)
920 NORTH STATE OF FRANKLIN ROAD, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37604

RESERVATIONS FOR THE WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING AND MEAL ON DECEMBER 11TH ARE FILLING UP FAST. THIS WILL BE A SPECIAL GATHERING WITH GOOD FOOD AND A SPECIAL PROGRAM ON OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY. THE COST IS \$11.00 PER PERSON.

*THE **RESERVATION DEADLINE IS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4TH**. PLEASE NOTE THAT RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE EVENT; WE CANNOT COLLECT MONEY AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT. A RESERVATION FORM IS ATTACHED TO THE **END OF THIS NEWSLETTER**; SEE NOTES ON THAT FORM FOR **COVID POLICY**. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, GET YOUR RESERVATIONS AND MONEY IN ASAP.*

*NOTE: THIS EVENT WILL BE THE **ONLY MEETING IN DECEMBER** DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.*

2022 OFFICER AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee will be presenting the slate of candidates for the upcoming election. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the November General Membership Meeting. **BALLOTS WILL BE MAILED OUT VERY SOON.**

2022 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership Dues statements for 2022 will be emailed or sent by US mail in November.

Dues: Individual Membership \$ 20.00
Family Membership \$ 5.00 per family member

Benefits: 12 issues of the "Whistle Stop", Watauga Valley's newsletter.
Membership in the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum.
Participation in all Museum functions and events.

Chuckey Depot / Museum

Since the Museum was opened on October 2, 2017, we have had several thousand visitors at and hundreds of volunteer hours. We want to thank all 87 WVRHS&M volunteers who are trained to host at the museum. We are planning more training sessions in 2022. Everyone is having a good time at the museum; please come and volunteer one day a month for four hours. If you're interested in hosting at the depot, please call the office and leave a message at (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

SANTA TRAIN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The WVRHS&M Santa Train Exhibit will be held on December 18th at the Chuckey Depot in Jonesborough at 110 South Second St. from 3 pm to 6 pm. WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough will sponsor the exhibit. Everyone is welcome to come out and bring their children to the restored Southern Caboose X450 and meet Santa Claus. We will need volunteers to help man the event in getting visitors staged around the caboose. Please signify your volunteering by signing the sign-up sheet at the November 22nd General membership meeting or emailing wataugavalley@gmail.com or calling 423-753-5797. This will be some good publicity for the WVRHS&M as we are expecting a lot of people to come aboard our beautiful red caboose and depot.

2022 WVRHS&M Train Excursions

The Watauga Valley 2022 excursion season will start on Saturday, May 14th, 2022 with a trip through the Great Smoky Mtns. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

Mechanical Department Report *by Jim Magill and Art DeVoe*

ROLLING STOCK

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): back home in Jonesborough; upgrades planned.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539), “Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): “Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100), and “St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): all four cars are in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum on their *“Polar Express”* trains.



From the Wishful Thinking Dept.: The date is September 10, 1990, and N&W 2-6-6-4 #1218 cruises past the Spring Street Coach Yard while on excursion service. What we wouldn't give to see a live repeat of this view. [Mike Tilley photo]

In the News

Two Unions are Suing Norfolk Southern

[*Trains News Wire*] Two unions are suing Norfolk Southern over labor practices, seeking an injunction against what they say is a railroad practice of forcing locomotive engineers to work as conductors and disciplining those who don't.

The Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Union-Transportation Division (SMART-TD) and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen announced that they had filed motions for preliminary injunctions against the railroad in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division.

SMART-TD is seeking an injunction returning to prior practice, which requires that only SMART-TD-represented train service employees fill jobs in those crafts and classes. The BLET seeks an injunction forbidding NS to force engineers to work as conductors, to halt discipline against those who refuse orders to do so, and to reinstate BLET members who have already been disciplined.

Union presidents Jeremy R. Ferguson (SMART-TD) and Dennis R. Pierce (BLET) said the situation was identical to one that led to a BLET strike on the Wheeling & Lake Erie in 2013. "Multiple ground employees on NS have sustained injuries in switching operations in recent weeks," they said. "We have made it clear to NS that forcing engineers to work ground assignments that they are not currently qualified on or familiar with is an invitation for more incidents."

The two unions had said previously they would pursue legal action against the railroad.

NS to Donate Southern Railway Archives

[*Trains News Wire*] Norfolk Southern is donating the archives of predecessor Southern Railway to the Atlanta History Center as NS prepares to mark the opening of its new Atlanta headquarters.

The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* reports the archives include hundreds of thousands of pages of correspondence, more than 20,000 photographs, reports, plans, and minute books. The donation will be officially announced today [October 25th], and will include a \$500,000 grant to help the history center catalog, organize, and digitize the materials.

Some of the material has already been delivered to the center and the rest will arrive by the end of the year.

"This puts us on the map as a museum with a quintessential railroad collection," Sheffield Hale, president and CEO of the center, told the newspaper. "It gives us that piece of Atlanta history, and regional history, with such granular detail and so many stories we wouldn't otherwise have."

Norfolk Southern CEO Jim Squires said in a statement that the "treasure trove of material belongs in Atlanta, and there's no better home than the Atlanta History Center."

NS is scheduled to open its new Atlanta headquarters building next month [November]. The railroad closed the museum at its Norfolk headquarters in June and deaccessioned some items at that time.

From the Vault ...

[ED. NOTE: The following manuscript, reproduced here unedited, is from the notes of former NRHS Chapter Historian and CLINCHFIELD Chief Engineer, James A. "Jim" Goforth.]

THE CLINCHFIELD ICE BREAKER CAR

The Clinchfield features a short direct line connecting the mid-west to the south Atlantic cutting directly across the Appalachian range with a total of 55 tunnels. It was these tunnels that presented problems with the transporting of tri-level auto shipments. The tri-level traffic began in the summer of 1960. When winter came large icicles that formed in the roofs of the tunnels began damaging the tops of the autos.

As the engineering department was responsible for tunnel maintenance, we had the job of removing the ice. First, we tried knocking it down with men on a scaffold car. This proved futile. We then determined that some device hauled in the train consist would be necessary.

Several ideas were considered. The final solution was a big heavy structural frame mounted on a flat car and placed behind the locomotive. The material was purchased and the fabrication was done in the car shop. Three frames were built. These were carried in scheduled freights during the freezing periods with two passes each day through all tunnels.

The top edge of the frame was 6 inches higher than the top of the autos. An official accompanied the first trip to observe the results. He reported that ice being torn loose from the tunnel roofs resembled a shower bath. The bed of the cars were often observed to be covered with a thick layer of broken ice.

The trade magazine "Railway Age" featured an article with a photo. Several mountainous railroads with the same problem contacted us for the ^{plan} ~~plan~~. We were only too glad to accommodate them.

P.S. I ~~idn't~~ didn't want to clutter up the article with this, but I ~~conceived~~ conceived the idea, designed it, made the plan, ordered the material and supervised the fabrication. *in Decembe 1960*
It was done with company material, company labor in the company shop. Otherwise I would have patented it.

P.S. #2 It ~~it~~ is observeable that typing is not one of my virtues.



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Copyright Greg Ropp

Craggy Mountain Line Field Trip ...

30 Watauga Valley members went over to Asheville (Woodfin) on November 6th to ride the complete Craggy Mountain Line from its start on Woodfin Road to the end of the line on Riverside Drive. We all had a great ride that included the scenery across Craggy Mountain. Thanks to CML president Rocky Hollifield (below left, next to Mike Tilley) for giving WVRHS members a chance to ride this historic trolley line. For information on the CML, go to <http://craggymountainline.com/>.



Display in the Block by Les Billings

To start out this month of “*Display in the Block*”, as you can see below, is a few of the new signaling that CSX is putting up from Kingsport through Johnson City. The photo below was taken from the bridge overlooking the tracks at the north end of Boone siding in Boones Creek. The rest of “*Display*” will be devoted to DPU’s & pushers. Hope you enjoy.



This Combo of pictures was shot in Piney Flats (Fannie Rd. crossing). NS 126 was heading east, as NS 201 was waiting on the siding for it to pass. As I was waiting on 126 to come through, I looked

down toward the overhead signals and saw a deer appear out of the thicket and walk along the tracks. It walked a little way down the edge and then back into the brush it went.



This Coal drag through the north end of Erwin had a rare mid-train power unit. Mostly what I have seen are pushers on the coal trains. This was the second time that day I had met this train. I caught it as it was going between Johnson City and Unicoi. I decided to set chase and see if I could photograph it again. As you can see, I was able to do so. This is the Brown Road crossing in north Erwin.



On a trip to Bristol, I was able to catch these DPU's on NS 126 as it passed under the bridge on W. Mary Street. This was a meeting of the two longest trains on the A-line at that time. Now these two trains have been shortened with no DPU's most of the time. Notice the gondola full of uncoated cross ties. I am sure they were on their way to a coating facility. It was leaving Bristol eastbound as it passes by NS 127 on the siding.

On a Sunday afternoon about 5:30 pm, I caught up with a CSX K447 ethanol train at the base of Buffalo Mountain.

The crossing is on Highridge Road/Garland Way. This pusher is facing outward, so if you did not know, you may think it is a single head unit heading north. It was heading south toward Erwin. The interesting thing about an ethanol train is that there is always a buffer car between the lead and pusher engines for safety.

Research shows this train starts in Bensenville, IL and ends in Charlotte, NC on an as-needed basis.



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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.



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TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING & MEAL



SATURDAY,

DECEMBER 11th, 2021

IT'S TIME FOR THE WVRHS&M ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEAL. THE FOOD WILL BE PREPARED BY FOOD CITY, AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SHOW UP AND ENJOY A GREAT MEAL. WE WILL GATHER AT THE DEPOT AT FRANKLIN COMMONS (FOOD CITY), 920 NORTH STATE OF FRANKLIN ROAD, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37604.

THE MENU WILL CONSIST OF OVEN FRIED CHICKEN, APPLE GLAZED PORK TENDERLOIN, TWICE BAKED POTATOES, MIXED VEGETABLES WITH CITRUS BUTTER, ALONG WITH SALAD, ROLLS, DESSERT, AND CHOICE OF DRINK – ALL FOR \$11.00 PER PERSON. WHAT A DEAL!!!

THE PROGRAM WILL CELEBRATE OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY, PRESENTED BY WATAUGA VALLEY HISTORICAN GARY PRICE. YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS IT!

TO MAKE RESERVATIONS, MAIL THIS FORM TO WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEAL, P.O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37605-0432, ALONG WITH YOUR PAYMENT. **RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021.** PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE EVENT. WE CANNOT COLLECT MONEY AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Number attending _____ X \$11.00 PER PERSON = Total Enclosed \$ _____

NOTES:

FOOD CITY POLICY REQUIRES MASKS TO BE WORN UPON ENTRY TO THE BUILDING BUT NOT IN THE "DEPOT AT FRANKLIN COMMONS". SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE IN PLACE FOR SEATING AND FOOD SERVICE.

ARRIVE BY 11:30 AM; THE SERVING LINE WILL OPEN AT 12 NOON.