

# Whistle Stop



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

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WVRHS&M member Les Billings posted this beautiful shot of NS train 127 on our Facebook page. If you're not visiting this site you're missing out on a treat.

## *March 28<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 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 his experiences in working for Norfolk Southern over the years. It's always great to have a guest speaker for our programs at our meetings. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your friends.

## *Member Notes*

Please keep Connie Hunt, Gary Price, Lois Tilley, Nancy Ritchie and Jack Maloney in your thoughts and prayers for various reasons. To report a need by one of our members or family, email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) to get a notice in the *Whistle Stop*.

### RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

If you know of someone interested in railroads, hand them a New Membership Brochure; brochures are available at the General Membership meetings.

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### LATE DUES NOTICE FOR 2022

Late dues notices have been sent out to those who have not renewed for 2022. Please act fast and get your dues notices mailed. Per by-laws, members who have not renewed by March 31<sup>st</sup> will be removed from the membership roster AND THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST *WHISTLE STOP*. Dues should be sent to Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. For questions, email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### PHOTOS FOR WHISTLE STOP

Several members are wanting to contribute photos for the Whistle Stop, please send your photos to our editor, Fred Waskiewicz at [whistlestop.editor@gmail.com](mailto:whistlestop.editor@gmail.com).

### NEW EXCURSION MAILING LIST

WVRHS&M has put together a new mass email list for people to get advance notification of future excursions. Anyone interesting in getting on this advance list, please send your information to [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### WATAUGA VALLEY UNIFORMS NOW AVAILABLE

Watauga Valley uniforms are now again available. If you need an order form sent to you, please email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) requesting one. Order your new uniforms now for these beautiful uniforms.

## *2022 WVRHS&M Rail Events*

**GSMR EXCURSION.** We are happy to announce that our 2022 Spring Excursion has sold out. We will have a very large crowd riding with us on the April 30<sup>th</sup> GSMR trip.



### DINNER ON THE DINER

The proposed date for this year's "*Dinner on the Diner*" is June 25<sup>th</sup>. Last year we fed over 180 people on the *Moultrie* and *Clinchfield 100*.

## *Chuckey Depot / Museum*

### NEW EXHIBITS

The Museum is coming alive in the Spring. The last several weeks' attendance has been very good, especially on the weekends, with over 50+ coming into see the beautiful depot and exhibits. If you have not been at the depot, come on down and see the new exhibits (photos below). Hours are Thursday, Friday and Sunday 1 pm to 4 pm and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm.



### CHUCKEY DEPOT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for more volunteers at the Chuckey Depot to be trained to host at the Museum. The next training sessions will be offered soon. If you would like to host at the depot, please email us at [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com). Get signed up to come out and enjoy your depot.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

*by Jim Magill and Art DeVoe*

### GENERAL

Three of the Watauga Valley passenger cars are back in the yard now and a lot of work is needed on them since they have been on the road for over 6 months. The bad weather has again taken its toll on the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team in working at the yard over the last several weeks. Hopefully the weather will turn around and we can get some of the work done that was planned for the spring. If you would like to volunteer at the Spring St. Coach Yard, please call the WVRHS&M office (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) and leave message; the mechanical team will call you back. We are in need of several more volunteers to help on the cars.

### ROLLING STOCK



**“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100):** New water system and tank (left photo) along with a new 142-gallon fuel tank being added to the car.

**“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400)** and **“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500):** are in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

**“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539):** has some electrical problems and will be receiving a paint job soon.

**“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351):** having work done on the electrical system.

## *In the News*



### *WVRHS&M Receives Grant Money*



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum is excited to announce the receipt of \$10,000 in grant money, awarded by the *John Emery Rail Heritage Trust*. The money will be used for repainting our coach WATX 539, a 58-seat coach, built by Pullman-Standard in 1949 for the Norfolk & Western's *Powhatan Arrow*.

The Trust, the largest in the U.S. that makes 100% of its awards solely for rail restoration projects, was founded by long-time Chicago resident and rail enthusiast John Emery. Emery, who rode trains around the world, wanted to help preserve rail equipment and infrastructure that will allow future generations to share his experiences between 1920 and 1960, in what he considered the Golden Age of rail travel.

This year the Trust has awarded 22 grants totaling \$350,000 for rail preservation projects. The grants selected come from 34 applications requesting more than \$1 million. A complete list of awards may be found at <https://bit.ly/3L1fleE>.



### *Update on ex-CLINCHFIELD Buildings*

#### *Johnson City Depot*



[WJHL, Johnson City] One of Johnson City's prime retail, restaurant and railroad locations is slated to host another business after the announcement of *BURG'r & BARREL* and *GATHER* at *JC Clinchfield Depot*. According to a press release from Peerless Hospitality Concepts, the new businesses are set to move in to 330 Cherry Street and offer a new social space for downtown visitors.

"B&B will also offer an array of signature dishes consisting of, several smoked meats, specialty side dishes, and of course the famous Grecian salads & more," the release said. "The trendy outdoor green space design that will be the big Wow factor."

The new venture is made possible by the Kalogeros family, known regionally for other concepts like *Peerless Steakhouse*. 84 years into their restaurant career, the family said they're excited to return to their roots just a block away from Fountain Square where it all began.

*BURG'R & BARREL* is expected to open in 10-12 weeks, with Constantine Kalogeros telling News Channel 11 that the family has high hopes for late May 2022.



[WJHL, Johnson City] A reminder of Johnson City's railroad heritage will soon house a new visitors center and the Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) offices. The city just purchased the two-story office portion of a railroad depot that was built in 1909 for the former Clinchfield, Carolina and Ohio (CC&O) rail line.

The CVB plans to move into upstairs offices in mid-July, less than seven months after splitting off from the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce after a partnership of more than 30 years. CVB Executive Director Brenda Whitson said the buildout of the first floor visitors center could begin by September. When it's done, CVB offices will relocate to that floor

## *Erwin General Office Building*



There is a party that is working with CSX to save the General Office building in Erwin. Nothing has been worked out yet and the party has not been announced yet. This is very good news for the old office building.

Completed in 1915, the Mechanical and Transportation Departments occupied the first floor and the Engineering, General Manager and Car Service departments occupied the second floor. In 1926, The General Office building was enlarged with a third floor and a fifty-foot addition on the south end. The remainder of the office force in Johnson City consisting of Legal, Claims, Purchasing, Treasury and Traffic were moved to Erwin. Also, new carpenter-coach and steel car repair shops were built. In 1915, it was announced that Yard Operations would be moving out of Erwin to Kingsport. The Signal Department and some of the track force remained into the building until late 2021. We understand everyone is out of the building as of this writing.

The bad news is that the diesel shop buildings along with switchman buildings and tracks 6 through 19 will be or have been removed by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2022. The mechanical car shop will remain to become a MOW shop to repair track machinery.



## *Former Circus Passenger Cars Burn in NC*



[Article and picture from *RALEIGH NEWS OBSERVER*] The fire that broke out on a string of former circus train cars in Nash County last week burned four of the cars beyond repair and left five others unscathed, according to the N.C. Department of Transportation. NCDOT, which owns the cars, plans to try to sell the undamaged ones and hasn't decided yet what to do with the ones that burned, said spokesman Jamie Kritzer. "We will be able to determine

our next steps when we can get a full assessment of the damage," Kritzer wrote in an email.

It's not clear what started the fire, which was reported at about 7 a.m. Thursday on a remote section of state-owned railroad track. The fire appears to have started in an old baggage car at the center of the train. Because the cars were in a wooded area about a mile from the nearest road, firefighters couldn't immediately reach them, allowing the fire to spread to other cars in both directions. As the fire burned, a locomotive carefully moved the cars to where firefighters could get at them. The State Bureau of Investigation is leading the effort to determine the cause.

NCDOT bought the cars from the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in 2017 with plans to refurbish them for use on the Piedmont passenger train between Raleigh and Charlotte. The rail cars were not insured, said Kritzer, the NCDOT spokesman. "However, these cars were not insured because they had not been refurbished and we were not preparing to put them in service." NCDOT has kept the cars on the remote unused section of track about 40 miles east of Raleigh because the state has limited room to store rail cars elsewhere, Kritzer said.

## *Display in the Block*

### *by Les Billings*

It's hard to believe that it is already spring. Hope everyone had a good winter. We need some good warm weather. Speaking of good weather, this past year I did a little railfanning in Greeneville, TN one Saturday afternoon on a beautiful day and below are a few shots gathered on that day.

Greeneville Depot setting on the north side of the tracks, was opened in 1905 when the first depot was torn down to build the current building. I hope that the Greeneville leaders will always preserve and keep this piece of railroad history for all to enjoy. Too many towns demolish these jewels in the name of progress. I can think of one town that did so and that has angered me for a long time. No names mentioned but I live in that town.



One always hopes to catch a train as you visit an old depot. On this day, I was lucky when NS 201 passed by heading west with its Intermodal loads. Locomotive 1183, an EMD SD70Ace, was in the lead. 4457 was second, which looked like it was fresh out of the paint shop. 201 is now an Intermodal/Mixed Freight and a much longer train.

Looking east down the tracks from the depot, we see a little history. The smokestack of the now closed Austin Co., a processor and seller of Burley tobacco. A business of days gone by, I am sure that tobacco was shipped by rail in those days.



The Greeneville switcher was setting on the side idling, waiting on its crew to return for another day of moving cars from Johnson City to Bulls Gap. It runs as T23 and T24. This locomotive has moved the WVHS&M coach cars many times.



Leaning on a stand behind the depot I found an EOT device. Maybe this is used on the Greeneville switcher.



Standing guard over MP 56.7 is this old design signal. Most new signals of today are the Darth Vader design with the single hood. This will probably be replaced one day and end up in a museum.

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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**