



Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
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Railroading – Past, Present and Future

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Mike Jackson, Editor

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Chapter Webmaster Fred Waskiewicz is running Ole 97 on the Valley Railroad in Essex, CT, during a recent visit.

Program on Southern Railway, Chapter's Steam Excursions

Next Watauga NRHS Chapter Meeting May 24

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held Monday, May 24, 2010, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Details about our Chapter's summer activities and trips will be discussed during the business meeting. Mike Tilley will present our program on the Southern Railway Steam Program along with one of the Chapter's steam excursions.

ANOTHER CLEAN-UP DAY SCHEDULED AT THE JONESBOROUGH COACH YARD

On Saturday, June 19, 2010, the Watauga Valley Chapter will have another Spring Cleaning at the Jonesborough Spring Street Coach Yard to get ready for the Jonesborough Days Open House of the Coach Yard on July 3. There are all kinds of jobs available for everyone. We will start at 9:30 a.m., and work until 12:30 p.m. Men and Women are all needed for this event. There is **plenty** of light duty work on tap for the day. Please make plans to attend; we need to get everything cleaned up for our special July 3 display event during Jonesborough Days. If you missed the May event, here is your chance to join us on June 19 and help us.

Ways to Sign up.

1. Sign the form at the next meeting.
2. Call the Chapter office at 423-753-5797 and leave your name
3. E-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO VOLUNTEER AT THE YARD FOR LIGHT DUTY WORK OR FOR WHATEVER YOU CAN DO TO HELP OUT. SO PLEASE, MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND.

JONESBOROUGH DAYS COACH YARD DISPLAY

The Jonesborough Days Planning Committee has asked the Chapter to participate in Jonesborough Days Celebration on Saturday, July 3. We will open-up some of our equipment to the public along with a display of railroad artifacts in the Rhein Building at the Coach Yard. If you have any railroad artifacts that you would like to display at this event, please let us know at the May meeting or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. We will need several volunteers for this event to show our guests around. It will be a great day of fun in Jonesborough on July 3!

SUMMER 2010 RAIL EXCURSION

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is pleased to announce its Summer 2010 Rail Excursion through the Scenic Hiwassee River Gorge in East Tennessee.

Excursion date is set for [Saturday, July 17, 2010](#). The excursion will feature the opportunity to ride the rails through the most beautiful river gorge in the United States as the railroad tracks travel along the Hiwassee River. The rail trip will take a 50-mile, 3 ½ hour round trip rail excursion along this beautiful river to the famous "Hiwassee Loop."

The special attractions of the trip will go thru the Narrows, where the Hiwassee River flows through rock channels, and the Bald Mountain Loop. The track actually passes over itself during a corkscrew climb up the mountain near Farner, TN, over a high trestle. Tracks along this route parallel the river for most of its length providing beautiful views of the lower gorge.

Regular scheduled passenger trains operated until 1968, and the last freight train traveled the Old Line in 2001. The railroad was originally built to haul ore from the copper basin in Copper Hill, TN. The Tennessee Overhill Association took over ownership of the rail line in 2004. This will be a very unique opportunity to get to ride on the historic railroad.

The train is general seating and features comfortable cushioned seats with large windows. Historic 1950's-era diesel locomotives will pull the Vintage enclosed climate controlled coaches. Passengers will be asked to move from one side of the aisle to the other before the return trip to ensure that every passenger will be able to view all the scenery in secluded areas along the line.

Our trip will begin in downtown Johnson City, TN at 7:15 a.m., on the morning of [July 17, 2010](#), at The State of Franklin Parking Lot, where passengers will board a motor coach to Etowah, TN. We will also pickup passengers at Century 21 parking lot at 2040 E. Andrew Johnson Hwy, Greeneville, TN at 7:45 a.m. Lunch will be on your own before we board the train at 1:15p.m., with the train departing at 1:30 p.m., and arriving back in Etowah at 4:50 p.m.. Our motor coach will depart Etowah at 5:00 p.m., with expected arrival back into Greeneville at 8:15 p.m., and 8:45 p.m., into Johnson City.

Ticket cost is \$80.00 per person. Meals are not included. Ticket includes train ride, and motor coach to and from Etowah, TN.

To order tickets, enclose your check or money order (sorry cash or credit cards not accepted) along with the number of tickets. Send check to: Summer 2010 Rail Excursion, Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, P O Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605- 0432. You can also go on line where there is a printable order form at www.wataugavalleynrhs.org - click on excursion trips. Please mark on your order form whether your loading in Johnson City or Greeneville on the motor coach. For questions about the trip e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com or phone the Chapter ticket office at 423-753-5797.

PROGRAMS FOR 2010

We need programs for our General Membership meetings each month in 2010, so if you have any programs, including railroad slides, a video, a DVD, or know a possible speaker, see Nick White, the Program Director at the May meeting, or call the Chapter phone 423-753-5797, or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

AREA RAILFAN NEWS

CSX will have their 2010 annual Rail Fest Track Jamboree June 21 – July 5. The railroad will be completely shut down from Shelby, KY, to Spartanburg, SC. Over 600 Maintenance of Way employees will be working between these two points, resurfacing and replacing ties on the track bed. No train watching during this time period except work trains on the old Clinchfield Railroad.

The Brush Creek Tunnel which is the first tunnel south of Erwin, TN, on the old Clinchfield at Green Mountain, NC, is back in the spot light again. There have been three wrecks near the tunnel since the first of the year. The tunnel has a very sharp curve at the south end which is reported to be causing all the problems. Engineers from Jacksonville, FL, have been on site looking at the possibility of day lighting the tunnel and straightening the track up at this location.

The Heartland Corridor will be finished within the next two months and NS trains 22A and 236 will be moved from the Roanoke – Bristol – Knoxville Line over to the Heartland Corridor to save mileage and crews. This will leave one regular stack train through Bristol along with the trailer train that operates between Memphis and Allentown, PA. NS has stated in their press releases that as soon as the Heartland Corridor is complete, work will begin on the Crescent Corridor which includes the Bristol Line which will mean more trains through Bristol.

Mike Tilley, Chapter President

Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS Minutes for Chapter Meeting, April 26, 2010

The Chapter meeting came to order at 6:30 P.M., on April 26, 2010, at the Johnson City Public Library. Mike Tilley, President, presided. There were 35 members present and one visitor. A motion was made to dispense the reading of the March minutes by Chris Harman, seconded by Jack Maloney and the motion passed. Mike Tilley welcomed our one visitor, Paul Freiberg of Bristol, TN.

SPRING EXCURSION – The trip to the Great Smokey Mountain Railway excursion was a good trip with five bus loads of riders. Everything went well except for some food problems on the café car. Mike is hopeful to have that resolved by the next trip.

SUMMER EXCURSION – A summer trip through the Hiwassee Gorge to Copper Hill from Etowah, TN, is now being planned. A possible date will be July 17.

FALL EXCURSION – Is still in the planning stages.

WINTER EXCURSION – The Great Smokey Mtn. Railroad is planning a Polar Express trip, and our Chapter is considering the possibilities of taking buses over to Bryson City, NC, for this trip.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RY KNOXVILLE LINE TOUR – There was a five car caravan for the trip and everyone had a great time.

SUMMER CHAPTER TRIP – It has been proposed for the Chapter members to go to the O. Winston Link Museum and the Virginia Transportation Museum in Roanoke, VA, via vans for an all-day trip. The cost for the vans would be \$12.00 per person. More details will be included in the next newsletter.

PROGRAMS – Chris Harman will have a program for June, but we need a program for May since no one offered a program.

NEW BUSINESS – There will be a clean up day at the Spring Street Coach Yard this Saturday. There will be hot dogs and hamburgers prepared by some of the women for the working crew. Please sign up if you can help.

JONESBOROUGH DAYS – These dates are July 3 & 4. There will be a display at the Spring Street Yard and volunteers will be needed to help on July 3.

NRHS NEWS – Jim Pahr reported that he had attended the spring BOD meeting in Huntington, WV, and had nothing new to report. He informed the club that the magazine: *Railfan & Railroad* has an article in the current issue about the upcoming convention in Scranton, PA. Also, if you are having problems with your Convention reservations/orders, you may call: 1-570-954-0758.

25 YEAR PRESENTATIONS – Mike Tilley awarded the following members with their 25 year pen and certificate: Chris Harman, Dr. Lewis Modica, Larry Brown, Jim Calhoun, Jim Magill, Lou Nelson, and Harold Orfield. Not all of these members were present, but each one will receive his pen and certificate.

MECHANICAL - Bob Yaple reported that the weather has been cooperating and that a full report on the crew's work will be in each edition of the *Whistle Stop*. The flat tire on the 539 has been repaired, and the crew is just about ready to start the painting on the *Crescent Harbor*.

PROGRAM - The program tonight was supplied by Richard Baker on a Clinchfield Excursion that had "F" units and some Knoxville footage.

The meeting adjourned at 8 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Jackson, Secretary

Mike Tilley, President

National Director's Report on Proxy Forms

Here is the 2010 Annual Meeting Notice and Proxy Form from Joe Maloney, National Secretary:

The Notice for the 2010 annual membership meeting and the associated proxy forms are out and in the hands of the NRHS membership. The 2010 annual membership meeting will take place in the Steamtown Room and the adjoining Casey Ballroom A-B and C in the upper level of the Hilton Scranton Conference Center, located at 100 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA, 18503-1826, at 2:00 p.m., EDT Friday, June 25, 2010.

Most members are seeing the proxy forms as part of the most recent issue of the *NRHS News*, while family members have received their proxies in the mail. The proxy is the most effective way members who do not attend the annual membership meeting can make their voices heard with NRHS Management. This is especially true now with the various critical issues NRHS is facing in its day-to-day operations.

Please encourage your membership base to send their proxies back to NRHS if they are unable to attend the annual meeting in Scranton. To be effective, each signed proxy must be in the National Secretary's hands **by June 10, 2010**.

The return address for those proxies is:

Secretary

NRHS, Inc.

100 N. 20th St., STE 400

Philadelphia, PA 19103-1462

Jim Pahriss, Chapter National Director

Van Trip to Roanoke Museums July 31

Saturday, July 31, 2010—Circle that date! Come and join the Watauga Valley Chapter of the NRHS as we take our members on a road trip to explore the exciting sites located in and around the beautiful railroad city of Roanoke, VA. After loading up the van in Johnson City, we will drive up I-81 north, all the while keeping a watchful eye on the NS Bristol line for trains, as we head on toward Roanoke. Upon arrival to the Star City, we will head over to the Virginia Museum of Transportation and visit our old friends, the 611 and 1218, as well as all the other wonderful displays that are located there. We then will break for a 'Dutch lunch' at "The Great 611 Buffet", a restaurant dedicated to the Norfolk and Western J-class 611, and the railroad men who built, maintained and ran the locomotive.

After lunch, we will head over to the world famous O. Winston Link Museum, located in the historic Norfolk and Western Passenger Depot, and tour his many wonderful photos and artifacts on display there. No trip to Roanoke would be complete without a visit to the site that gives Roanoke the distinction as the "Star City", the Roanoke Star and overlook for a grand view of all of Downtown Roanoke and the NS shops and yards. The cost of this trip is only \$30 per person, and it covers the cost of the van, fuel, and tickets to both museums. So come along for a great day of railroading, and leave the driving to us. Chapter members Nick White and Gary Price are heading up this exciting day of railroading.

Sign ups and payments

Nick White and Gary Price will be handling all arrangements for the July 31, 2010, Star City Van Tour. Due to agreements with the van company, if you wish to go, you must sign up with Nick White no later than Saturday, July 17, 2010. All payments must be made in full to Nick White no later than the July Chapter meeting on July 26, 2010. No Exceptions! This is a break-even tour, and no profits will be made. The vans will leave Johnson City promptly at 7 a.m., on the morning of July 31. Come and join us for a fun-filled day!!!

Gary Price, Keeping Norfolk Southern safe...one tie at a time.

Member Notes -- May Whistle Stop

WELCOME to our newest member, Paul Freiberg of Bristol, TN. We hope to see him at Chapter meetings and other activities.

Our sympathy is extended to Mike and Lois Tilley in the death of Mike's aunt, Mary Sue Keebler, on April 21, 2010, at her home in Gray, TN. Also to the family of Virginia Randolph Lingar, Kingsport, who passed away on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, in Rock Hill, SC. Her husband, Charles, died in January of 2010. The Lingars had been members of Watauga Valley Chapter since 1995.

Following are several members and friends we should keep in our thoughts as they deal with health and other concerns: Walter Byrd, George Ritchie, Charlene McLeod, Ken and Agnes Kerns, Mike Jackson, and Ferrell Snyder. Please let us know of any member, family or friend to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made to brighten their day. Call the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Help us keep in touch.

Nancy Jewell, Contributor

Work on the NS Lynchburg to Durham Coal Line!

The Lynchburg and Durham Railroad was chartered in 1887 and construction of the 115 mile railroad from Lynchburg, Virginia, into Durham, North Carolina, was completed in 1890. It was built to tap the rich lumber fields and tobacco farms located along the route. In 1893, the Norfolk and Western took over the L & D, and it became known as the N & W's Durham Line.

This line had its beginnings hauling agriculture products, now the main commodity is coal as Norfolk Southern delivers several 100 car unit coal trains daily complete with pusher units to feed the bellies of three major power plants located along the line, one in Virginia and two in North Carolina. Maintenance of Way forces refer to this line as the "Roller Coaster" line because of the straight, steep uphill grades followed by a steep downhill run right back into another uphill grade over and over again along the entire route. It takes all the horsepower that our little machines have to climb these grades, then we wear out our breaks keeping things in check going down the other side.

My adventures in railroading took me recently to South Boston, Virginia, home of Ward Burton to all you NASCAR fans. We had an unusual task to do this time around: re-tie the individual tracks that lead directly into the two power plants located just across the state line in Roxboro, N.C. We unloaded our equipment at Cluster Springs, VA, and backed-up 4 miles to the Mayo Junction switch, then backed up another 4 miles on the Mayo Branch to reach the massive coal facility. The present day Mayo Power Plant is operated by Progress Energy and went on line in 1983. It is currently known as the 10th largest coal fired plant in the United States. It employs 350 people and generates 3,227,000 kilowatts, enough power for 2.6 million homes. One thing is for certain...you do not stop the coal trains that go into this facility! After finishing the four miles on the Mayo Branch, it was time to back down the mainline to the second branch at Hyco Junction.

Hyco Branch is a long 6-mile line that snakes its way uphill to the Hyco Power Plant. This was my second time visiting the facility, and we set off to work at the switch located at the "Balloon Track" used to run coal trains around to the rotary dumpers. Hyco Power Plant is also operated by Progress Energy and is ranked as one of the top 10 power producers in the United States, capable of producing 25 megawatts of power which leaves the power station on transmission lines that carry up to 500,000 volts. Hyco regularly burns 150 carloads of coal per day and also keeps a stockpile of coal that could last the plant up to 60 days. After finishing the branch lines, we backed up toward the end of the mainline at Roxboro, NC, (NS abandoned 25 miles of track from Roxboro to Durham several years ago), and we began working north towards Brookneal, VA.

Passing through Denniston, one can barely see the abandoned grade of the Norfolk, Franklin and Danville railroad. At South Boston, you can still see the grade where the Richmond and Danville railroad crossed the mainline, and the wooden bridge that held the western side of

the diamond is still intact there. The switch that leads to the Clover Power plant is also located here and uses part of the original Richmond and Danville line to access it. I have never been to the Clover facility, so maybe I will in a few years, but this time we kept working north.

One interesting train that now runs on this line actually carries a by product of the three power plants, and that is a coal ash train. Gondola loads of the burnt ash are collected from the three facilities and used in the manufacturing of sheet-rock. At Brookneal, Virginia, the Durham line has a connection track with the former Virginian Railroad, and this is where all loaded coal trains destined for the three power plants are routed from Roanoke. All empties return via Lynchburg.

Gary Price, Keeping Norfolk Southern safe...one tie at a time.

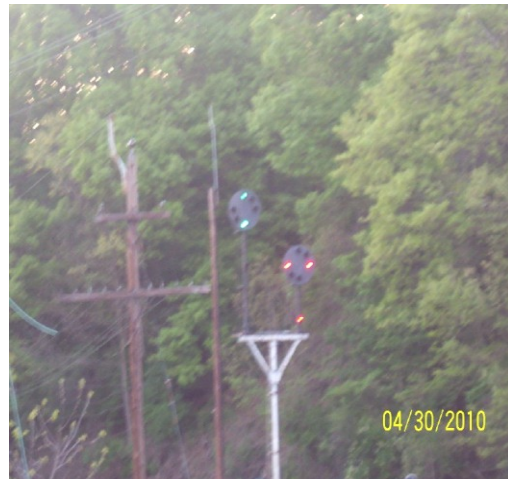


Top Left—Cluster Springs, VA, and the former Lynchburg and Durham Railroad depot that is still intact and in private ownership.

Right—South Boston, VA. Here is the original crossing of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, and all that is left is the bridge and a walking trail.

Left—How close do I live to the tracks when I am at work? Well, to the left is my camp car; the window is where my bed is, to the right is a Clover bound coal train. Ah, the life of a railroader!

30 April 2010 Train Day on the Bristol-Roanoke Norfolk Southern Line—Right, Train 16T rounds the curve at Groseclose, VA, heading for Rural Retreat, VA, and a meeting with Train 37Q at Crockett, VA. Below, with the EOT working on the rear, 16T passes one of the telephone-telegraph poles still standing on the former Norfolk & Western Railway line. At Marion, VA, right-center photo, the main-line signal is green for the 37Q to proceed to Bristol, VA, to change crews and then go on to Knoxville's Sevier Yard.



The former N&W depot at Marion, VA, has changed very little in this picture on April 30, 2010, (bottom left) when compared to an April 30, 1971, photo (bottom right) on the morning of the final passenger train between Bristol and Roanoke. Photos by Betty Jackson



Due to a large number of reports, news items, and pictures submitted for the May Whistle Stop, the remainder of the material will be included in a supplemental issue that will be released May 24. Thanks, Mike Jackson, Ed.



From the Engineer's Point of View! CSX Engineer and Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Member Tony King took these photos at milepost 141.8 on the old Clinchfield (now CSX) in the Nolichucky River Gorge (inset photo) recently. The scenic location is about a half mile inside Tennessee, north of the North Carolina state line, and is called the Gulf Hole because there is a really deep fishing hole there. Thanks Tony for permission to use these breath-taking pictures!

**Railway Historical Society
Watauga Valley Chapter
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