

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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Watauga Valley Chapter Meeting June 28

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held Monday, June 28, 2010, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. The program will be presented by Chris Harmon on his visit to Cass Railroad. Chris has an excellent program so come on out and bring a friend.

CLEANUP DAY AT THE JONESBOROUGH COACH YARD

On Saturday, June 19, 2010, the Chapter will have another Spring Cleaning at the Jonesborough 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 do it again.

Ways to Sign up.

1. Call the chapter office at 423-753-5797
2. E-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO VOLUNTEER AT THE YARD FOR LIGHT DUTY WORK AND DO WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP OUT. 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 for tours 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 June meeting or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

In addition, 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. If you can volunteer at this special event, please sign the signup sheet at the June meeting or call the chapter office at 423-753-5797 or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. Please volunteer for this special event.

SUMMER 2010 RAIL EXCURSION TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE

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 views of the lower gorge.

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 1:15 p.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 or \$70.00 for children (3 years to 12 years of age), 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 you're 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 June meeting, or call the chapter phone 423-753-5797, or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

Membership Chairman's Report

Welcome to our newest member—Douglas Thompson of Johnson City, TN. Please welcome Douglas when you see him at our meetings.

With some more members renewing their membership, the Chapter's renewal total now stands at approximately 90 per cent.

Here's a reminder that all members can receive the *Whistle Stop* by email each month. If you want to receive the newsletter by email, please contact Mike Jackson at ki4ojomike@gmail.com.

Harriet Swank, Membership Chairman

Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS Minutes for Chapter Meeting, May 24, 2010

The Chapter meeting came to order at 6:30 P.M., on May 24, 2010, at the Johnson City Public Library. Mike Tilley, President, presided. There were 27 members present and two visitors.

A motion was made to dispense the reading of the March minutes by Jack Maloney, seconded by Paul Haynes and the motion passed.

Mike Tilley welcomed our two visitors, Peggy Brown and Jill Kelly (Nick White's Mother).

SUMMER EXCURSION – The Etowah/Hiwassee trip plans have been finalized and the date will be July 17. Anyone who wants to be a host on one of the three buses should contact Mike Tilley. The buses will leave at 7:15 a.m., and will be going to Greeneville, TN, to pick up passengers. The buses should be back no later than 8:30 p.m. and even could return earlier.

FALL EXCURSION – Mike T. has secured four dome cars for the trip with a possibility of one more. There will be two diners with a total of possibly 25 cars for the train's consist. The plans are well underway for the October 30th and 31st trips. Mike and some of the other members will be going to meetings in the next few weeks, working more on details. The sign up for the trip may start next month. One very good change, Mike said, is that there will be boarding passes given out on Friday night so the loading on Saturday will go smoother and quicker.

WINTER EXCURSION – The Great Smokey Mtn. RR Polar Express will be on December 4. Our Chapter will be taking buses over for this trip. The buses will leave by 5:00 p.m. and will return around 9:30 p.m.

SUMMER CHAPTER TRIP – The trip for the Chapter members to go to the O. Winston Link Museum and the Va. Transportation Museum in Roanoke, VA, via vans has also been finalized by Gary Price and Nick White. The cost will be \$30/per person which includes the cost of the vans and the tickets to both of the museums. Please let Mike Tilley, Nick White, or Gary Price know if you want to go. Money for the trip has to be given by June 28th.

JONESBOROUGH DAYS – These dates are July 3 & 4. There will be a display at the Spring Street Yard on July 3, and volunteers will be needed to host visitors when they tour the Yard and our coaches.

CLEAN UP DAY – There will be a Spring Street Coach Yard clean up day on June 19th and many volunteers are needed.

PROGRAMS – David Denny will have the July program—a CD on the Sugar Cane Train, a narrow-gauge tourist line running from Lahaina to Ka'anapali in Hawaii. Programs for August, September and November are still needed.

NEW BUSINESS – Treasurer Duane Swank needs some assistance with some of his errand duties, and Mike T. asked if anyone could help Duane to see him (Mike) after the meeting.

MECHANIAL - Bob Yaple reported that there had been great progress on the wiring of the *Crescent Harbor* and photos of the work were passed around. There has been more than 5,000 feet of wire and hundreds of connections installed. A Chapter member suggested a program on the work at the Yard, so Mike T. asked if there could be a program on the progress of the work on the car presented at a future meeting.

The program tonight was supplied by Mike Tilley on the Chapter's 1989 excursion on the 1218.

The meeting adjourned at 8 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Jackson, Secretary, Mike Tilley, President

Mechanical Reports for April, May

Crew Continues Work on Diner, Crescent Harbor

GENERAL: Because of the good weather in April and May, the Watauga Valley NRHS Mechanical Crew continued its general clean-up that included some work in the Jonesborough Spring Street Coach Yard.

ROLLING STOCK: The 400 *Moultrie Diner* is back in the Yard, and the mechanical crew removed the brake valves for recertification and an inspection. Brake shoes on the "B" end have been replaced. In May's report, a serious leak in the Moultrie's air conditioning system was found in the condensing coil that was installed new by the crew two years ago. It was repaired without losing any coil capacity. The *Clinchfield 500 Coach* remains at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, while the *Powhatan Arrow 539 Coach* has returned from the Depot Street siding in Jonesborough where a new wheel set was installed.

Crescent Harbor: In April's report, the crew worked on the car's marker lights with elements of the "brake on" system installed, buffer tubes (gray in color) were completed, and they look great! The Head End Power (HEP) wiring is in progress with most of the "B" end completed over the truck.

In May's report on work underway on the *Crescent Harbor*, wiring of the car's marker lights continued, wiring of the HEP, safety circuits, and 27-pin communication circuits—all under the car—continued, and this work involves placing over 5,000 feet of wire when finished.

Connecting the wire is in progress. 96 connections on the HEP have been completed. 128 connections on the "A" end's 27-pin is complete with a like number to do on the "B" end. The safety circuit will involve 84 connections. This is why electrical jobs are the most labor intensive work of all the mechanical trades.

We have applied special sealant to the water tanks to seal pinhole leaks in the MFG's crown welds. After this work, we will retest for pressure holding. The shroud for the water tanks has been repaired, and we are re-assembling the parts. Also, it is sporting a fresh coat of paint!

Meanwhile, paint removal in the lounge and corridor is nearly complete with some water damaged wall panel repair yet to be completed. Rework of the corridor and vestibule overhead lights is in progress, and when complete there will be a plug-in connected for easy maintenance. Yes, more connections! Finally, the gates and curtains on both ends are being installed.

Finally, the next clean-up work day for Chapter Members to help us clean up the Coach Yard for Jonesborough Days in June 19. Come out and join us to spruce up the Yard!
Bob Yaple, Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer

Running the Number 97 - A Childhood Dream Come True

By Fred Waskiewicz

I recall as a little boy watching my Lionel train circling the track at Christmas, dreaming of being at the throttle and guiding a mighty steam locomotive along miles of track. That dream continued into adulthood, next as a rail fan riding behind excursion or tourist engines. However, little did I hope that running an engine would be anything more than my imagination until I opened my birthday present this year from my wife Bonnie. To my great surprise, I found a certificate granting me the opportunity to drive a vintage steam locomotive!

The opportunity was sponsored by the Valley Railroad Company in Essex, CT. Known as the Essex Steam Train, this tourist line traces its beginnings to 1868, when the state granted a charter to build a line along the Connecticut River from Hartford to the Atlantic seaport of Saybrook. Today's tourist operation offers a 12-mile, one-hour round trip beginning in Essex that can be combined with a river boat ride. Motive power includes two steam engines: #40, a 1920 ALCO/Brooks Mikado, and #97, A 1923 ALCO/Cooke Consolidation. These two engines are the "stars" used in their "Hand on the Throttle" program, an educational program providing the opportunity to not only learn about the operation of a steam locomotive, but also to actually drive one!

The engine in service on the rainy April day I was scheduled was #97, an ominous beginning for any fledgling engineer. Vowing not to repeat the fate of engineer Broadey at Stillhouse Trestle, I was a most attentive student during the one-hour safety and operation lecture. And I should note that keeping an open mind reinforced a life-long belief that you can always learn something new – a testament to the skill and knowledge of the instructor.



Getting underway!

Having successfully passed my instruction, it came time to climb into the cab and leave my imaginary world behind. A company engineer and fireman were at my side to assist me (and to protect the company's investment, I might add!). Due to concern of roadbed integrity caused by recent rains, the normal out-and-back route from Essex Station was modified to a northbound and southbound trip out of the station. This now meant four major highway crossings combined with the more rural right-of-way. There was no consist coupled to the train but that was to be expected when you have a novice at the throttle.

My engineer responsibilities included controlling the throttle, the brakes, the reverser, the automatic bell, and the engine's headlights. I'm fairly comfortable with the understanding of the mechanics of steam locomotive operation, but as I was to find out, translating that knowledge into physical movement is another thing. (I should note this was the first time in my life that I've ever operated any type of heavy machinery.) Once I got past my initial nervousness, the flow of operation moved smoothly for me with a few exceptions. Underway, the reverser needed to be pulled back to reduce piston travel which required expert advice. I had great difficulty in gaining a good feel for engaging the throttle (as did many others enrolled in the program that day). There was significant initial play in its movement before the linkage to the cylinder was actually engaged. From that point, only minute movement was

required, but I encountered a resistance that required an experienced hand to overcome through a “snapping” motion that wouldn’t cause the wheels to slip. Speculation from other enrollees having the same issue was that this was a sticking problem due to the engine’s first day of operation; it was just showing its age; and a reinforcement of what we rail fans have always been told – that each of these machines has an individual operating “personality”.

Like all engineers, I was required to keep an eye out for obstacles on the track ahead. I thought my shining moment came when I warned my crew of a person on the track ahead. It turned out it wasn’t a drunk playing “chicken”, however, but rather another VRC employee wanting to flag down the train to warn of a just-discovered soft spot in the roadbed ahead. Speaking of keeping an eye out, there was a small pop-up on top of the cylinder chest that I was supposed to watch to ensure proper pressure, but it took eyes a lot keener than mine to stay on top of that sighting.

Besides the major crossings noted, there were several minor at-grade crossings which required my giving the familiar “long-long-short-long” signal. At one crossing I pulled a little too hard on the chord and really let out a blast. I turned to the (real) engineer and remarked “that should wake ‘em up!” He smiled and suggested I tone it down a little at the next crossing. Good public relations, that man. On our first return to the station he asked if I found having to sit backward in the seat uncomfortable. To be honest, I could have been standing on my head and still would have loved every minute. This was undoubtedly the fastest 60 minutes of my life. At the end of my run, I didn’t step down from the cab – I floated down.



Can you find the rail fan in this picture?

Regarding my performance, I will staunchly defend my position that I met my major goal of never causing the wheels to slip and am not responsible for any flat spots on the tires. However, I do wonder how hard I worked the fireman, who was very gracious and never complained about my driving - at least in my presence!

The little boy still in me can stop dreaming now. I’ve since traded his Lionel O scale Hudson for big boy G scale geared locomotives. But now when I control my model train movements, I’m not pretending to be in control. I’m remembering the thrill of really having my hand on the throttle. To learn more about the Essex Steam Train and its various programs, go to <http://www.essexsteamtrain.com/index.html>. **The writer is our Chapter’s webmaster.**

Remember!

The Chapter’s Van Trip to Roanoke, VA, to see the O. Winston Link and Virginia Transportation Museums is July 31! We have plenty of seats available. If anyone is interested in going on this trip, please call me at 276-759-4498 or email me at nickwhite_@hotmail.com. Thanks!

Nick White

N&W Class J 611 at the Link Museum in Roanoke during the 2010 Train Day activities on May 8. Photo by Mike Tilley





Editor Mike's Notes...

Ed Wolfe—who has written books on the Interstate Railroad and Miller Yard in Scott County, VA—has just completed an informative thoroughly-researched book on the Southern Railway's Appalachia Division (from Appalachia, VA, to Bulls Gap, TN, from Bristol, VA-TN, to Appalachia to St. Charles, VA, and from Bristol to Elizabethton to Mountain City, TN) and the predecessor lines.

The book covers the period from the initial attempts to construct a line into the coalfields of southwest Virginia in the 1850's to the end of the Division in 1985. The book has a hard, color cover with original artwork and 416 pages (b&w). Coverage includes predecessor roads (V&K, BC&I, SA&O, BE&NC, V&SW, V&SE and others), compound mallet and simple articulated operation, Lonesome Pine Special passenger service, dieselization, purchase of Interstate Railroad, unit train operation, radio controlled trains, track sketches, Southern's Holston TOFC service, the route of the "Bristol Man", etc. It includes 380+ b&w photos, 75+ maps, 80+ timetables and schedules and 75+ miscellaneous tables, and charts.

Ed said, "the book retails for \$60; I'm selling them for \$50 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling." Checks should be made out to: HEW Enterprises and mailed to Ed Wolfe, HEW Enterprises, 116 Oakview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA. 15218.

A supplement to the June 2010 *Whistle Stop* with more news on the Chapter's July 3 activities will be prepared and released the week of June 28. It will be distributed at the June 28th Chapter meeting and sent to members who receive their monthly newsletter by email. If you want to receive a copy by email, please email me at ki4ojomike@gmail.com.

Watauga Valley NRHS Officers, Board of Directors and, Appointments for 2010

Mike Tilley	President
Bob Schubel	Vice- President
Betty Jackson	Secretary
Duane Swank	Treasurer
Jim Pahriss	National Director, Chapter Librarian
Gary Price	Historian

Directors: Bill Beagen, Jim Calhoun, Helen Calhoun, Art Devoe, Mike Jackson (Newsletter Editor), Penny May, Nick White (Publicity Chairman, Program Chairman), and Bob Yaple

Appointments:	Jim Magill, Chief Mechanical Officer
Bob Yaple	Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer
Duane & Harriet Swank	Newsletter Circulation
Fred Waskiewicz Jr.	Webmaster
Mike Tilley	Trip Director
David Denny	Chapter Attorney
Nancy Jewell	Membership Notes Reporter
Harriet Swank	Membership Chairman
Walter Byrd	Communications Chairman
Jack Maloney	Spring St Coach Yard Maintenance

The Whistle Stop

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Meetings are the fourth Monday, except December, 6:30 p.m.,

Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the Chapter 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.

Clip Art of Railroad Heralds Courtesy of Ken Houghton (KH) Railroad Clip Art.

Mike Jackson, editor, Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation.

Mike Tilley, Nancy Jewell, Bob Yaple, Harriet Swank, Jim Pahriss, Gary Price,
Nick White, and Betty Jackson, contributors

Send correspondence to ki4ojomike@gmail.com

Latest News from the Nation's Railroads

CSX Reopens Memphis-Nashville Line

JACKSONVILLE, FL—Working ahead of schedule, **CSX Transportation** re-opened its Memphis-Nashville line that was heavily damaged by severe flooding in early May about two weeks ahead of schedule, company officials said. Operations resumed in late May over the entire length of the approximately 200-mile line in western Tennessee, including two bridges spanning the Harpeth River that were heavily damaged. Some train re-routes over other rail carriers continued for several days until all work was completed. "This is a terrific accomplishment by the CSX team," said David Brown, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "Despite the fact that many of our employees were directly affected by this tragic flooding, they brought an extraordinary focus to re-opening the line and resuming service to our customers and the communities in that stricken area." Earlier estimates had called for resuming service in mid-June, but work progressed more quickly due to the employees' efforts, Brown said.

In addition, CSX, a leader among transportation companies in environmental stewardship, has obtained its first LEED® green building certification from the U.S. Green Business Council. The LEED® certified building is a newly constructed 22,500-square-foot division headquarters in Florence, SC. "CSX is committed to implementing innovative and sustainable practices throughout the company's network," said W. Wayne Bostic, AIA, CSX director of facility design. "Reducing our carbon footprint is a major focus of our everyday operations and that translates to constructing facilities which are environmentally-friendly." CSX was the first railroad to join the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Leaders Program, and in 2009 voluntarily committed to reduce CO2 emissions by 8 percent per revenue ton-mile by 2011. CSX also was the charter railroad member of EPA's SmartWay Transport Partnership, which promotes voluntary reductions in fuel consumption and emissions. In 2007, CSX became the first railroad to win the SmartWay Excellence Award, which recognizes freight carriers that have made significant contributions to protecting the environment.

From CSX Media Releases

ATLANTA, GA—**Norfolk Southern** and GE Transportation have announced the success of a technology that could change the rail industry by increasing the average network speed of trains by 10-20 percent or two-to-four miles-per-hour. One mile per hour in velocity improvement has the potential to save approximately \$200 million in capital and expense annually, NS says. GE's RailEdge® Movement Planner is breakthrough software that improves railroad capacity and reliability while reducing transportation costs. By integrating railroad logistics with traffic control systems, the technology projects expected track usage, based on train schedules, and then produces an optimized plan to get trains moving faster and more efficiently. By maximizing existing railroad resources, RailEdge also improves railroad crew management availability. "RailEdge optimizes the railroad resources that are already in place – something that only technology can truly help us achieve – by enabling railroads to move more freight faster on their existing networks. This technology increases the capacity of railways worldwide, without laying a single new track," said GE Transportation's President and CEO, Lorenzo Simonelli

From an NS Media Release

GREENWICH, CT—**Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (GWI)** stockholders approved all resolutions at the company's annual meeting in late May. Michael Norkus was elected by the stockholders to the board of directors for a two-year term. Mr. Norkus is founder and president of Alliance Consulting Group and has served as a director of GWI since 2009. Philip J. Ringo, Mark A. Scudder and Oivind Lorentzen III were elected by the stockholders to the board of directors for three-year terms. In other annual meeting business, the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as GWI's independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2010, was ratified by the stockholders. **GWI owns and operates** 62 short line and regional freight railroads in the United States and three other countries, including the **East Tennessee Railway**, a 7-mile rail line servicing Johnson City, TN. area. The ETRY directly services a number of customers in the agricultural, chemical, forest products and metals industries. ETRY also offers team and lease track availability for self service transload operations. The ETRY has connections with both CSXT and the Norfolk Southern. **From a GWI News Release**



A photo by Mike Tilley of the Clinchfield Railroad's 4-6-0 (CRR) "Little No 1" that pulled CRR excursions and the Santa Train from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. The historic and popular locomotive is on display at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, Baltimore MD.

**Railway Historical Society
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