

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
P O Box 432 Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleynrhs.org



Railroading – Past, Present and Future

Volume 30 No. 9

September 2010

CREW CHANGE

After a great job serving as your newsletter Editor, Mike Jackson has found it necessary to step down. I'll be taking over for the foreseeable future. Despite being a charter member of the Chapter, a past Whistle Stop Editor, and current webmaster, many of you don't know me. That's due to my IT career causing me to leave East Tennessee back in 1989. (I call myself a migrant electronic worker.) My living in New England and not making it to Chapter meetings and events is certainly going to put using electronic media for communications to the test. Nevertheless, I look forward to the opportunity of working closer with you (even if it's "virtual"). Send me suggestions at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com for subjects you'd like to see covered in the newsletter. I'll do my best to accommodate you. Submissions are cheerfully encouraged but please ensure we have permission to print material from other sources. (Finding something published on the internet DOES NOT count as permission.) I may be experimenting with different styles. Let me know what you like – and don't like. In closing, I'd like to add my voice to everyone's in a hearty "Well, done, sir!" to Mike Jackson.

--- Fred Waskiewicz

SEPTEMBER 27 CHAPTER MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of Watauga Valley NRHS will be held Monday, September 27, 2010 at 6:30pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Details about our upcoming Amtrak Excursion to Roanoke and Asheville will be announced along with information about our Polar Express Train in December. The featured presentation will be decided by Member's choice of two very entertaining videos. You do not want to miss this interesting program. Bring a friend and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Member Notes by Nancy Jewell

Congratulations to Bob Douglas, Bristol, VA, on being a first-time Grandfather with the birth of grandson Aaron on August 24, 2010. Don't forget to bring pictures, Bob!!

WELCOME to several new and rejoining members. From Virginia: Mary Roach, Teresa Jill Kelly, Robert and Mamie Maule, and Amy Blevins; from Tennessee: Jeanie and Billy Walker, Rosemarie Markey, Terry and Anita Worley, Lionel and Thnetta Mallicote, Graham Carriger (young son of Phil and Misty Carriger), and James Smallwood; from North Carolina: Mary Ann Guier. We hope the Chapter meetings, newsletter, excursions, Yard work, and other activities merit their railroading interests.

Please keep these members, relatives, and friends in your thoughts as they continue with health concerns: Doug Zimmerman, Bob and Carol May, Jeanne Cope, Walter Byrd, Mike Jackson, Carrie Denny, and Farrell Snyder. Most recent addition to this list are Mark and Joy Calhoun Foster, son-in-law and daughter of Jim and Helen Calhoun. Joy broke her ankle in a fall and a couple of weeks later, Mark fell and broke his leg. They both are ready to give up wheel-chair living ASAP. Our get well wishes go out to all of these folks.

As always, please let us know of anyone to whom a card may be sent or a phone call made to bring a little cheer. Call the Chapter phone 423.753.5797 or Nancy Jewell at 423.282.0918. We do care!

Punkin' Vine. Part 2: The North Carolina Side

by Gary Price

[Article continued from August Whistle Stop]. As mentioned in last month's column, we had our machines parked in the sidetrack located at Fontaine. We fired them up and performed our normal Monday inspections before heading on south. Once again we had a 32 mile trip ahead of us before we reached the next work site. I love these early morning trips by rail. It is so peaceful and enjoyable to a rail fan like me. We crossed the VA / NC line at Price, NC (MP R-80.6) and slowly made our way, winding slowly through the small North Carolina communities of Stoneville, Mayodan and Madison before finally arriving at Pine Hall and the start of our next job at MP R-105.5.

This is the location of Belews Creek Junction, a 4 mile branch line whose tracks lead steeply upgrade to the towering Belews Creek Steam Station. This must be my year to do power plant branch lines, as this job required us to upgrade the entire 4 miles of track. We broke ground just off the mainline switch and steadily worked our way upward toward the power plant. On the third day we stuck in the last tie and pulled ahead into the yard located at the facility. The Belews Creek plant was built in 1974 by Duke Energy and has a capacity of 2,240 megawatts. It is currently the largest power plant in the Duke system, and it utilizes the 3,863 acre Belews Creek Lake to cool the two massive power units

located there. Hot water is returned to the lake keeping waters at a warm temperature all year round, making it a favorite sight for campers.

Of interest to us in the WVC area, the 757 coal train that passes through our cities with two NS units in the lead, 120 loaded coal hoppers, and two NS pusher units is a dedicated coal train whose only destination is the Belews Creek Steam Plant.

For reasons unknown to me, storms follow us to this area. In the past we have encountered rain, wind, floods and even three tornados and sure enough, while we were at the facility, a strong storm hit the area. People often ask me, "What do you do when it rains?" Well, my reply is "get wet!" and that is exactly what we did as high winds pushed rain sideways so hard that rain found its way into my rain-gear and I was soaked. Lightning danced all around us, obviously drawn to the power plant. The reoccurring thunder would shake us all the way through. The storm finally cleared and we backed down the branch line and returned to the main line to head south into the sunset to our next destination, arriving in the dark to Walkertown (MP R-118.5) to tie down for the weekend.

Monday morning arrives and we are back to work at Walkertown. The job started at the MP R-118 and would carry us all the way to the yard at Winston-Salem, located at MP R-119 where Norfolk Southern's auto trans-loading facility is located. In last month's column, I referred to the "unstoppable NS274 auto train". Well, this is that train's destination. All makes of cars, trucks and vans are shipped to this central location, unloaded from rail cars and reloaded onto transport trucks to be distributed to NC auto dealerships. From the looks of all the shiny, new cars that were unloaded while I was there, maybe, just maybe, the economy is looking a little better now. Winston Salem Yard begins at MP R-123 and ends at MP R-124.4. Ties were heavy on the main line through the yard. The track charts show that the last tie work done was in 1994. We ended up replacing more ties in the yard than we did in the entire 4 miles of mainline prior to the yard. Also sharing the yard at Winston Salem is the Yadkin Valley Railroad, a short line owned and operated by the Gulf and Ohio Systems, and the Winston Salem Southbound Railway, a joint partnership between NS and CSX. We loaded our equipment onto flatcars and headed back to Roanoke once again.

CHAPTER LICENSE TAG

We finally have the new CHAPTER OFFICAL LICENSE TAGS available to everyone. The cost is what the chapter has to pay - \$9.00. To get yours today, order at the next Chapter Meeting or send in a check (no cash, please) for \$9.00 to Watauga Valley License Tag, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432. Tags will be made after the order is turned into the company and should be available several weeks after that. Tags will not be mailed out. You can pick them up at the Jonesborough Spring St. Coach Yard or at the Chapter Meeting.



In the News

CUMBRES & TOLTEC LOBATO TRESTLE FIRE

The Associated Press reports that repairs to the C&T's Lobato trestle, damaged by fire on June 24th, could run around \$2 million. C&T officials have said that two engineering firms that evaluated the fire-damaged trestle agreed it was repairable. The trestle is insured for up to \$360,000 with a \$50,000 deductible, meaning \$1.7 million more is needed for repairs. The states of New Mexico and Colorado, which own the railroad, have been approached for help. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

ET&WNC #15 RESTORATION

Recently uploaded to the "Tweetsie" Yahoo Group was the August 2010 issue of "ET&WNC COMBINE 15" newsletter. It contains some good historical information and superb photos and dialog detailing their restoration work on the combine. Only Group members can access this information but the good news is membership to the Group is free.

NS HEARTLAND CORRIDOR OPENS

[Reprinted with permission from Norfolk Southern]

Norfolk Southern's *Heartland Corridor* - one of the most extensive railroad engineering projects in modern times and a template for public-private partnerships that strengthen the nation's transportation infrastructure - officially opened for business [September 9th].

A ceremony at the railroad's recently enlarged Cowan Tunnel near Radford marked the occasion, as Norfolk Southern Train 233 pulled through at 11 a.m. with a consist of 148 double-stack containers moving to the Midwest. Train 233 paused near the 3,302-foot tunnel's western portal, where it was greeted by the corridor's partners, designers, and builders, as well as news media and NS officers and employees.

"This is a remarkable achievement, and it marks a notable date in transportation history," NS CEO Wick Moorman told the group. "Together we have shown what can be accomplished when the right partners work together for the right goals. The *Heartland Corridor's* completion is not an end but rather the start of an era of new thinking, new resolve, and new optimism in which business, communities, and the public sector find creative ways to power the American economy."

The *Heartland Corridor* is a public-private partnership between NS and Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, and the federal government to create the shortest, fastest route for double-stack container trains moving between the Port of Virginia and the Midwest. The new routing improves transit time from Norfolk, Va., to Chicago from four days to three and is nearly 250 miles shorter than previous circuitous routings.

To achieve that, NS raised vertical clearances on 28 tunnels and removed 24 overhead obstacles on one of its main lines connecting the Mid-Atlantic to the Midwest. Construction

began in Oct. 2007 and involved modifying 5.7 miles of tunnels through roof excavation and liner replacement, arched roof notching, and track lowering and realignment.

The line dates back to the late 19th Century and traditionally has carried mostly coal traffic. Today, the Heartland Corridor improvements provide more capacity, speed, and reliability not just for coal trains but for the 20-foot, three-inch-high container trains that carry a diverse range of products required for international commerce and consumer demand.

On behalf of Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, Secretary of Transportation Sean T. Connaughton said, "The Heartland Corridor will significantly advance Virginia's economy and transportation network. This project will improve the economic competitiveness of the Port of Virginia and spur economic development in Southside and Southwest Virginia through new intermodal facilities. The strong partnership between Norfolk Southern and the Commonwealth continues to move Virginia into the future."

The *Heartland Corridor* and Norfolk Southern's other public-private partnerships, such as the *Crescent Corridor* program of improvements to infrastructure and other facilities through 13 states from Louisiana to New Jersey, also offer a number of social benefits.

"The U.S. Department of Transportation is proud to be a partner, along with Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia, in making this historic project a reality. The Heartland Corridor will reduce highway congestion and fuel consumption, while improving air quality and transportation safety. For too long, rail has been the forgotten mode, but today's celebration shows it is more indispensable than ever as an integral part of our national transportation system. On behalf of President Obama and Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, we congratulate Norfolk Southern on its completion and inauguration," said Joseph C. Szabo, federal railroad administrator.

Today's program at Cowan Tunnel was one of three events related to the Heartland opening. An open house on Sept. 8 at the Rickenbacker Intermodal Terminal in Columbus, Ohio, highlighted the freight transfer facility that serves as the corridor's western anchor. A gathering on Sept. 13 in Prichard, W.Va., will feature one of the first eastbound intermodal trains on the route.

"Demand for rail freight service in the U.S. is expected to nearly double by 2035, and that's on a national transportation network that everyone agrees already is sorely stressed," Moorman reminded the Cowan Tunnel group. "As recently as several years ago, the crystal ball was too cloudy to provide a roadmap for meeting the coming challenges. Now, the *Heartland Corridor* provides a clear and workable vision of the way forward."

SOUTHERN COACH #810

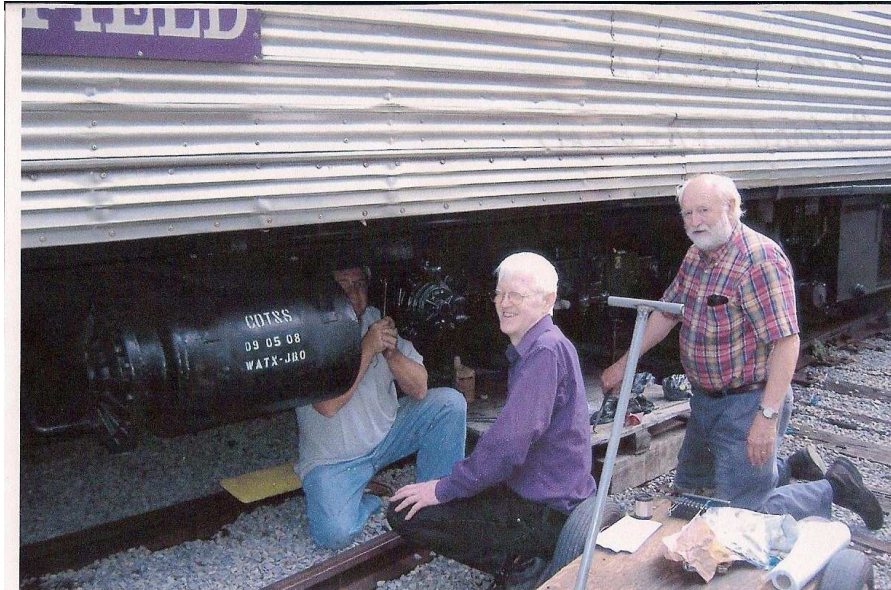
Tim Moriarty, Chesapeake Railway Association's "High Green" editor, posted a query on the whereabouts of ex-SOU coach #810 "Bristol". A Google search found a site showing the coach parked along the Wes Davis Greenway in Bristol (a rail-trail over a portion of ex-V&SW ROW). A footnote on another site mentioned it was awaiting restoration. Is that fact or fancy? For the picture of the coach, go to <http://tinyurl.com/2c4xu77>.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report *by Bob Yaple*

[400 MOULTRIE DINER](#). A new set of brake shoes have been installed. The kitchen and serving areas have been re-lamped with CFL Dageciyat Bulbs. These bulbs make these areas very bright and airy.

[500 CLINCHFIELD COACH](#)

Now back from TVRM, the brake valves have been re-certified and re-installed. Testing is now in progress. Both cars will get a PC-1 inspection [a 10 year inspection in which an Amtrak inspector rolls the trucks out from under the car] this month. The photo at right shows Jim Magill, Richard Freeman and Don Findley working on the brake valves of the Clinchfield



on the brake valves of the Clinchfield

[539 POWHATAN ARROW COACH](#). An extensive rework of the air conditioning and heating systems is nearly complete. Involved is removal, cleaning and replacement of the "A" system condenser replacement of a solenoid valve on the "B" system, rewiring of both systems controls with new digital units.

The generator sets on all three cars have been checked and serviced.



[CRESCENT HARBOR LOUNGE / SLEEPER](#). Interior painting is progressing. The lounge is nearly complete; the corridor is in primer; and a deteriorated wall panel has been replaced. New bearing box straps have been completed and installed for the final Amtrak inspection of the 40 year truck rework. Wiring for under-car lighting and service outlets is in progress. Work on installing the generator set involves removal of starting systems that will not be used. Work continues on the re-fabrication of the under-car mounting frames and installation of wiring, conduit and contractors for controls. A first for us – an auto start control will start the generator set when HEP is not being supplied. At left is a photo of the freshly-painted Crescent Harbor hallway.



Photo Section



OUR DISAPPEARING RAILROAD HERITAGE ...

The following 2 images were submitted by Chapter Historian Gary Price. They serve as evidence of how pieces of the region's railroad legacy continue to fade into the past.



Left: After years of service protecting the siding at Henry [VA], this N&W position light lies face down in the dirt awaiting its final disposition.

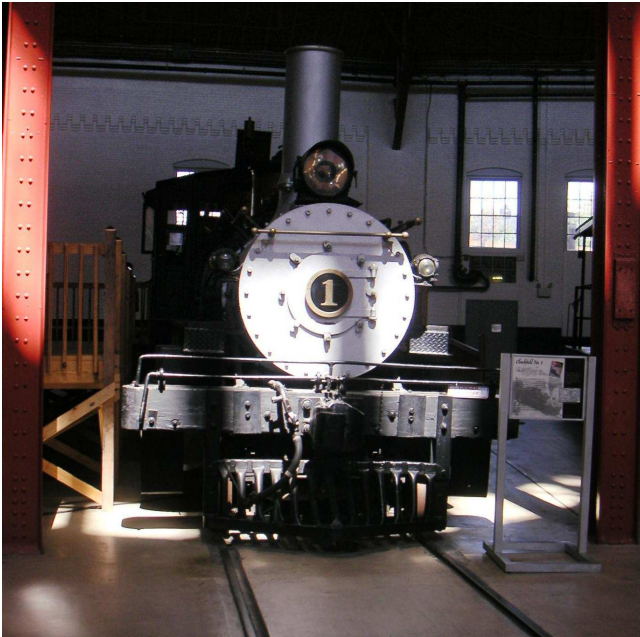
Right: This two tiered N&W position signal has been knocked down and destroyed. It was visible from the South Route 52 bridge over the yard at Winston-Salem, NC. The signals once protected the interchange between the N&W yard and the WSSB [Winston-Salem Southbound] Railway.



NS Track Work



Nick White sent us this photo of the TS-2 Super Tie Gang based out of Atlanta, GA replacing railroad ties through Marion, VA. The equipment is parked on a siding behind the Marion town pool. According to Mike Tilley, at this time the gang is doing work on track at different locations. The *Crescent Corridor* program is down the road for major track work from Roanoke to Knoxville. (Work is also being performed through Jonesboro.)



CLINCHFIELD No. 1

The July issue of the Whistle Stop reported an idea gaining traction locally concerning the return of CLINCHFIELD No. 1 to Erwin. On a recent trip to Baltimore, your Editor captured this photo of the engine in the afternoon shadows at the B&O Railroad Museum on Pratt Street. While somewhat dwarfed by larger locomotives on either side, the "1 spot" is resting comfortably and safely inside the former Mount Claire car shop, having escaped any damage in the catastrophic 2003 roof collapse.

Right: A Norfolk and Western "hamburger herald" was spotted on a grain train heading south to Winston-Salem. (Gary Price photo)



NEW CHAPTER UNIFORMS

If you want a new uniform before the fall excursion (which is purely optional – you may wear your existing, standard fall uniform instead), the deadline for ordering is by the Chapter Meeting on Sept. 26. To order, include a check (no cash, please) payable to the Watauga Valley Chapter N.R.H.S. with the order form on the next page. Orders may be turned in at the September Chapter Meeting or mailed to: Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. The photo at right shows the new Chapter patch on the new royal blue shirt.





CHAPTER UNIFORM ORDER FORM

Name: _____ Email/Phone: _____

SHIRTS:

Royal Blue – Port Authority Sport POLO Shirts (with new Chapter Patch)

Mens - No: K500

Ladies – No: L500

Small \$14 _____
 Medium \$14 _____
 Large \$14 _____
 X-Large \$14 _____
 2 XL \$15 _____
 3 XL \$17 _____
 4 XL \$18 _____
 5 XL \$20 _____

Small \$14 _____
 Medium \$14 _____
 Large \$14 _____
 X Large \$14 _____
 2 XL \$15 _____
 3 XL \$17 _____
 4 XL \$18 _____
 5 XL \$20 _____

Royal Blue – Port Authority Easy Care BUTTON UP Shirt (with new Chapter Patch)

Please specify MENS Long sleeve – No: S608 or MENS Short sleeve – No: S508

Small \$16 _____
 Medium \$16 _____
 Large \$16 _____
 X Large \$16 _____

2 XL \$17 _____
 3 XL \$18 _____
 4 XL \$19 _____
 5 XL \$20 _____

Royal Blue – Port Authority Easy Care BUTTON UP Shirt (with new Chapter Patch)

Please specify LADIES Long Sleeve – No: L608 or LADIES Short Sleeve – No: L508

Small \$16 _____
 Medium \$16 _____
 Large \$16 _____
 X Large \$16 _____

2 XL \$17 _____
 3 XL \$18 _____
 4 XL \$19 _____
 5 XL \$20 _____

HATS (with new Chapter Patch): Gold Five-Panel Twill Cap – No: 6202 - \$5.00 _____

WINDBREAKER:

Royal Blue Sport-Trek Sideline Jacket with flannel lining – No: JP71 (with new Chapter Patch) Adult

Small to 6 XL - \$22 – Size Needed: _____

NAME TAGS - \$7 each - _____ List names below to be added to name tags

Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society
P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432
wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

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. 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 this Chapter or the photographer.

Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



**Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL