

Whistle Stop



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



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

Volume 31 No. 11

November 2011



Two great personalities on last year's CSX Santa Train: The Man Himself and Wynonna Judd.

[Photo used with permission from E.D. Bell, <http://www.pbase.com/kd4jsl/>]

CSX Santa Train schedule Saturday, November 19, 2011

Kentucky	Shelby: leave 6:30 am	Marrowbone: 6:45 – 7:00 am	Elkhorn City: 7:25 – 7:45 am
Virginia	Toms Bottom: 8:05 – 8:15 am	Haysi: 8:27 – 8:42 am	Clinchco: 9:00 – 9:15 am
	Fremont: 9:28 – 9:53 am	Dante: 10:28 – 10:48 am	St. Paul: 11:08 – 11:28 am
	Dungannon: 12:13 – 12:33 pm	Ft. Blackmore: 12:53 - 1:08 pm	Kermit: 1:48 – 2:18 pm
	Waycross: 2:30 - 2:45 pm		
Tennessee	Kingsport: arrive 3:08 pm		

November 28th Chapter Meeting

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Railway Historical Society & Museum will be held Monday, November 28, 2011, at 6:30 pm, at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Don Findley, Chapter Photographer, will present videos and photos of our Autumn Train Excursions out of Spencer to Roanoke and Toccoa. This is the first time that the Watauga Valley RSHM has assigned someone to take photos and video during the trip. Don took hundreds of photos during the two day event of Chapter members and passengers enjoying the train rides. Come out and see this interesting program.

Member Notes

by Nancy Jewell

Our sympathy is extended to Jim and Helen Calhoun and Leland and Linda Calhoun in the death of Jim's sister, Virginia Foster, on November 4, 2011. Mrs. Foster spent most of her life in Erwin, Tennessee, before moving to Georgia near her daughters.

Please let us know of any members, families, or friends to whom a card may be sent or a phone call made. Phone the Chapter at (423) 753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918. Again, thanks for helping us keep in touch.

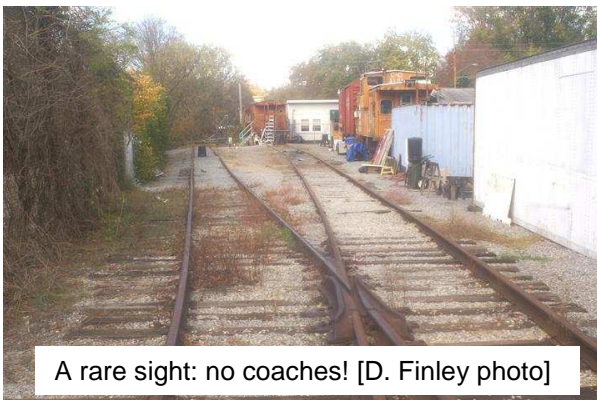
We wish a safe and Happy Thanksgiving Day to all!!

Autumn 2011 Train Excursions

The 2011 Autumn Train Excursions went very well with little problems. If you were not able to work these trips, go ahead and pencil on the calendar for next year. Everyone had a great time on both trips. The Toccoa trip was our first trip to this little town and it turned out to be a fun time for all with the Harvest Festival, Toccoa Falls visit and best of all, the town citizens lining the tracks welcoming our train. We had a full train with 25 cars and three engines. There is nothing more fun than riding down the mainline at 79 miles per hour.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple



The Mechanical Committee is taking a short break after the major undertaking of getting the *Crescent Harbor* on the road. As most of you know, the *Crescent Harbor* performed beautifully with only a few minor problems. This was the first time the car had been in a passenger train consist in over 32 years and she did excellent with passengers on board.

We have the car back at the Spring Street Coach yard and the Mechanical Crew has already winterized the car. If you would like to be part of our mechanical team, please call (423) 753-5797 and leave a message. Many projects are on drawing board for 2012 and we need as many hands as possible to pitch in and help.

ONCE AGAIN! THANKS TO THE MECHANICAL CREW FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK ON THE *CRESCENT HARBOR* IN GETTING IT READY IN TIME FOR THE EXCURSION TRAINS.

THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

I would like to thank all of you for your help on the Virginia and Georgia Autumn Train Excursions out of Spencer on October 29th & 30th. Everyone did an excellent job in the operation of the train. A "Well done!" goes out to the Safety Directors; Car Hosts; Dining Car Crews; Mechanical Crew; and Supply Crew. We had a total of 62 crew members just in first class!

You get better each year! Plans are full steam for next year's trips at Spencer. I am very proud of the chapter's performance on the train. With nearly 1000 passengers each day on the train, it's a hard job but we pull through each year.

Kelly Alexander at the North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation told me to thank everyone from her side of the mountain.

Mike Tilley, President
Watauga Valley RSHM

WATAUGA VALLEY ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee is hard at work putting together a slate of Officers and Board Members for the 2012 season. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the November 28th General Membership Meeting. All candidates must meet the requirements of being a Watauga Valley Member for at least a year and have attended at least 5 chapter meetings since January 1, 2011. The Officers and Board Members are always looking for hard working members who will contribute to the Chapter's continuing success.

CHUCKEY DEPOT REPORT

The Chuckey Depot project is moving right along on schedule. The Town of Jonesborough is presently working on grants to get the station erected. Meanwhile, the structure is being stored in trailers. Jonesborough, the oldest town in Tennessee, lost its depot in 1972 when it was torn down by the railroad. The current owners of the Chuckey Depot had to make a decision on what to do with it as NS wanted it removed from their property. A Win-Win situation! The Chuckey Depot was saved and Jonesborough got its wish of another depot.

SE Narrow Gauge Museum needs your help!

The new Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum needs your help. They have applied for a Pepsi Refresh Everything grant for \$25,000 to help preserve their collection. Please go to <http://pep.si/ulnSz5> and cast your vote! This grant will enable them to get trucks for their narrow gauge ET&WNC #434, CAROLINA & NORTH-WESTERN #401 and LAWNDALE #311. Voting ends November 30th. For more information on the museum, go to <http://www.newtondepot.com>.

DUES NOTICES FOR 2012

As most of you know, membership dues notices have been sent out. Below are the options, prices and membership benefits available to you. If you only want to join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, check Option 1. If you want to join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum and NRHS, check Option 2. If you want to join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum and the Railroad Heritage Alliance, check Option 3. Regardless of your selection, you will be a member of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum.

Check which membership option below you desire and mail the form along with your check to WATAUGA VALLEY, P. O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN. Everyone will still receive the NRHS dues notices. If you want to join the NRHS (Option 2), please also send in your NRHS Dues Notices along with this form.

_____ OPTION 1: WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

<p>Individual Membership: \$20.00</p> <p>12 issues of the Watauga Valley newsletter Member of the Watauga Valley RHS&M</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dues</p> <p>Family Membership: Indiv. plus \$ 5.00 per family member</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benefits</p> <p>Participation of all functions of the Watauga Valley RHS&M</p>
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_____ OPTION 2: WATAUGA VALLEY CHAPTER OF THE **NATIONAL** RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M

<p>Individual Membership: \$56.00</p> <p>12 issues of the Watauga Valley newsletter</p> <p>Member of the Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS, RHS&M, and the National Railway Historical Society</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dues</p> <p>Family Membership: Indiv. plus \$ 5.00 per family member</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benefits</p> <p>Participation of all functions of the Watauga Valley RHS&M, Chapter and NRHS Four Issues of the NRHS Bulletin</p>
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_____ OPTION 3: WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM AND THE **RAILROAD HERITAGE ALLIANCE**

<p>Individual Membership: \$35.00</p> <p>12 issues of the Watauga Valley newsletter</p> <p>Member of the Watauga Valley RHS&M and the Railroad Heritage Alliance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dues</p> <p>Family Membership: Indiv. plus \$ 5.00 per family member</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benefits</p> <p>Participation of all functions of the Watauga Valley RHS&M and the Railroad Heritage Alliance Four issues of the Railroad Heritage Alliance Publication</p>
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QUESTIONS?

Call the Chapter Office at (423) 753-5797 or e-mail us at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

CHAPTER UNIFORMS

Several members have stated that they wanted to order a Chapter uniform. Please fill out the attached form and mail back to the Chapter postal address or bring to the Membership meeting.

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:

Athletic Gold Port & Company Six-Panel Twill Cap – No: CP80 - \$5.00 _____
(with new Chapter Patch)

WINDBREAKER:

Blue Sport-Trek Sideline Jacket with flannel lining – No: JP71 (with new Chapter Patch) Adult Small to 6 XL - \$22 – Size Needed: _____

NAME TAGS - \$8 each - _____ List names below to be added to name tags:

WATAUGA VALLEY CHAPTER RHSM ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEAL SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2011



CHRISTMAS GATHERING. It's time once again for the Chapter's annual Christmas Meal, and this year we plan to gather at the Jonesborough Visitors Center, 117 Boone St., Jonesborough, TN. Please bring your food to the Visitors Center by 11:30 AM as the serving line will open at 12 noon. The Chapter will provide meats, drinks, deserts and rolls. Members are asked to bring a vegetable and salad, 2 vegetables or 2 salads. Please bring enough food for yourself, for your guest(s), and for several others. To make reservations, please mail the form below to Watauga Valley RHSM Annual Meal, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. You can also call in your reservation to the Chapter's Office phone at (423) 753-5797; turn in your form at the November 28th meeting; or email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. As always, there will be good food and good fellowship! Please have your reservations in no later than Saturday, December 10, 2011.

YOU'LL see US at the *Christmas Gathering!*

Name _____ Number Attending _____

Address _____

City / State _____

Phone Number _____

I/we will bring 2 - Vegetables ____ 2 - Salads ____ Vegetable and Salad _____

Please Note!!!

THE CHRISTMAS GATHERING WILL BE OUR DECEMBER MEETING. WE WILL NOT HAVE A MEETING ON THE 4TH MONDAY OF DECEMBER.

"Norfolk, Virginia"

by Gary Price



[Photo from Wikipedia]

Lamberts Point Coal Terminal. Always one of my favorite places to work, but it seems I rarely get the chance to. This year however, my luck finally changed and I found myself pointing my trusty old Pontiac Van east and vowed not to stop until I reached water. After arriving in Skip Banner territory, I made my way to Lamberts Point to find my camp cars parked near the front gate. Odd I thought, because we normally set up over near the old roundhouse. I would find out later why we were placed in a different location.

The coal yards are easily the most recognizable place on the entire NORFOLK

SOUTHERN system, with over 255 different yard tracks for storing, classifying and blending coal, and the two dinosaur-like loading towers that stand 17 stories in the sky. The facility annually handles around 48 million tons of coal, most of it is loaded onto foreign vessels, but ironically, the day I ventured down to the operation, there was a ship from New Orleans being loaded with the black diamonds. I sat there and watched as loaded hopper cars two-by-two began their journey from the Barney Yard, up the ramp to one of two massive Rotary Dumpers. With a black cloud of dust, the cars are turned upside down and their bellies of coal are emptied into conveyor belts and whisked away to the loading towers. The empty cars are then shoved down a steep track that rises abruptly and just long enough to hold two cars. Then they roll through a switchback that looks like some kind of a theme park roller coaster, and gravity guides the wandering cars safely into a storage track to be made into a train to head back to West Virginia. I joking blame all these earthquakes and weather patterns on the Earth becoming off-balanced due to all the years of millions of tons of coal that has been removed from underground.



This place may be all about coal, but the time had come to maintain the tracks so these heavy hopper trains could safely be unloaded. Our chore was to retie the "B" yard, and the "OD" yard. It had been several years since the yards had been serviced, so the ties were in rough shape and many came out in just chunks or splinters. The most unusual thing that I took note of was that the salt water had eroded a lot of the spikes, and when the spike [continued on next page]

puller machines tried to pull them, the heads would break off at the tie plate. Needless to say, we had a mess on our hands, but we handled it like professionals.

Send in the Clowns

We always joke about the size of our gang as the circus coming to town. When we show up to work, we have 38 men, 2 supervisors, 2 cooks, 3 mechanics, 1 mechanic supervisor, 22 on-track machines, 12 camp cars on flat cars, 17 loader flat cars, 3 pickup trucks, 3 mechanic trucks, 1 boom truck, 1 fuel tanker truck, and finally a school bus. I soon found out why our camps were re-located while in Norfolk, the OTHER circus was coming to town and we had to share the yard with them.

Every day we had been working until past dark, but the day the RB&BB train came into town, they made us clear up extra early due to all the moves the train had to make to place the 56 cars in the consist to three different tracks. Just before dark, the headlight of a CSX locomotive appeared just west of the yard, and the Red Edition of the circus train made its way into the yard, and circus employees were standing in all the doorways anxiously waiting to get off the train, and begin unloading.

The first section of the train, the living quarters, were uncoupled and shoved into the track near the roundhouse that we normally use. The second set of cars, the equipment flats, was located in the next track, and as soon as the locomotives left, a ramp was lowered and the men quickly began unchaining and unloading the trucks, trailers and other vehicles. Finally, the elephant and horse cars were spotted on the same track as our gang's camp-cars. The CSX locomotives uncoupled and headed back to their home rails.

Around 8 p.m. we were treated with the rare opportunity to be up close to watch the animals being unloaded and lined up in preparation for the parade through Norfolk to the Scope Arena. To our surprise, members of PETA had already set up picket lines all along the way with signs proclaiming that the circus practiced cruelty to animals. I was almost positive that the Russian lady whipped the horses a little extra just to irritate the protesters. We talked to several of the circus employees throughout the next two days, and discovered that we both live similar lifestyles on the rails, we both have a ringleader, and yes, we both work with clowns.

It was a great experience being in Norfolk once again, and as I saluted goodbye to the NORFOLK SOUTHERN "Emerald Tower", I was happy to be leaving town before the start of hurricane season.



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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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