

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432  
(423) 753-5797  
[www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org](http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org)



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

Volume 33 No. 12

December 2013



The two festive photos above capture CSX continuing the long-standing tradition of the "Santa Train". While, for many, the Christmas season officially starts with the arrival of Santa by sleigh in New York City's "Thanksgiving Parade", for the fine folk in Southern Appalachia, the season begins with the arrival of Santa by rail. Now there's a difficult choice: travel by sleigh, or travel by train.

[Photo credits: left - Emily Price; right - Mary Clay.]

*No December Meeting!*

Don't forget that there won't be a December meeting. See you January 27, 2014!

From Watauga Valley RHS&M, here's wishing You and Yours  
a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and  
a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

## *Member Notes*

By Nancy Jewell

Congratulations to Carrie Denny, daughter of David and Lyndell Denny, on receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from ETSU on December 14, 2013. Best wishes, Carrie!



The annual Christmas luncheon held on December 7th was very well attended. There were approx. 85 attendees packing the house. It was good to see and talk with Bob Yapple and Bob May; both deal with health concerns. A note was received from JoAn and Coy Edwards that they are feeling better but not up to traveling and not able to come to

the luncheon. President Mike Tilley conducted a short business meeting. Lester Collins and Mike Tilley recognized the youth members for their dedicated work on our 2013 excursion trains. We want to thank Lois Tilley, Jane Edds and Art Devoe for their hard work in putting this gala Christmas event together.

As usual, please let us know of any members, families or friends to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is 423.753.5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423.282.0918.

With the year 2014 coming in just a few days, we send very sincere wishes to each of you for a New Year filled with love of family and friends, peace of mind and strength to make each day just a little bit better.

### ***IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR 2014 DUES YET ...***

... then your membership is about to expire on December 31<sup>st</sup>. You'll find attached to the end of this newsletter the Dues Notice for 2014 renewals. Please return to Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605. As in 2013, you have several options to consider when renewing. You can: (1.) join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum for \$20.00 individual and add family members at \$5.00 each; (2.) join the National Railway Historical Society, which has raised dues by \$11.00 to \$70.00 this year; (3.) join WVRHS&M and the Railroad Heritage Alliance for \$35 individual and add family members at \$5.00 each; and (4.) join all three organizations for \$85 individual and add family members at \$5.00 each. Each option is specified on the Dues Notice. Any questions should be posted to [wataugavalley@embargmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embargmail.com).



## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

By Bob Yaple

**CLINCHFIELD:** The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum's newest car, the **Clinchfield**, is being painted at press time in the paint shop in Spencer, NC (see photo at right showing the platform painting). The car is being painted in three sections due to its size. We are hoping to have the stripes and lettering on the car sometime in January.

**ST. AUGUSTINE COACH:** At Spencer for the Christmas Excursion trains out of the museum.

**MOULTRIE DINING CAR:** Back in the Coach Yard for the winter.

**POWHATAN ARROW COACH:** In Spencer for the Christmas Excursion trains out of the museum.

**CRESCENT HAROBR LOUNGE/SLEEPER:** Back in the Coach Yard for head end wire repairs. The power generator support frame has been modified to meet the unrestricted AMTRAK clearance diagram. Final installation will follow when the weather breaks.



## *Jonesborough Holiday Tour of Homes*



On Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, Historic Jonesborough conducted its annual Holiday Tour featuring eight of the town's most treasured establishments. Guests were allowed a once in a lifetime peek into a selection of the town's most inspiring and festively decorated structures.

As part of the tour, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum was asked by Jonesborough to open up two of our passenger cars for this special event. More than happy to comply, we opened up the **Crescent Harbor** sleeper / lounge and **Moultrie** dining car

for tours. Between 300–400 visitors passed through the cars in a matter of three hours, many of whom had never been in a railroad passenger car. Visitors were treated to refreshments in the **Moultrie** dining car. WVRHS&M members served as hosts and guided visitors with tours of the cars while providing detailed histories of all of our equipment. According to Jonesborough officials, the cars were the talk of the Tour.



We appreciate the following members who came out and helped make this event possible: Jane Edds, Lois Tilley, Frank Rohor, Ian Ring, Randy Moore, Jack Maloney, Edna Carter, Megan Kegley, Mike Tilley, and Cline Knowles.

## *In the News*



### **NORFOLK SOUTHERN Supports ex-N&W #611 Restoration through Sale of Painting**

In a fortunate intersection of the worlds of fine art and railroading, NORFOLK SOUTHERN has sold a well-known abstract expressionist painting and will use a portion of the proceeds to help fund the restoration and long-term maintenance of another American treasure, the ex-NORFOLK & WESTERN RAILWAY Class J No. 611 steam passenger locomotive.

NS Chairman and CEO Wick Moorman said NS sold its untitled 1959 Mark Rothko painting through an auction in New York City on Nov. 14 and will direct \$1.5 million of the proceeds to “Fire Up 611!”, the capital campaign to rehab the famous N&W streamliner and return it to passenger excursion service.

“No. 611 is an American classic, a reflection of a time and a people who put the country on their backs and carried it into the modern age of railroading,” Moorman said. “611 is not an NS, N&W, Virginia, or Roanoke locomotive. It belongs to everyone and every generation. In that spirit, and on behalf of NS employees everywhere, I announce our strong support for bringing back a true national marvel.”



Photo courtesy of Mike Pierry, Jr.

The “Fire Up 611!” plan contemplates making the locomotive available for service in NS’ 21st Century Steam program in 2014. In this program, several vintage steam locomotives from NS’ past give people throughout the railroad system opportunities to ride behind the marvelous, powerful locomotives of old, while learning how today’s railroads create jobs, support the economy, save fuel, protect the environment, and keep America competitive.

Rothko (1903-1970) was a Latvian émigré who became one of the U.S.’ most famous post-World War II artists. He resisted having his works labeled, but art critics said he wanted people to have spiritual experiences when viewing them.

NS’ signed Rothko painting was created in 1959. The “oil on paper laid down on canvas” image measures 29-1/2 by 21-1/2 inches and features amorphous forms that float on top of each other. NS bought the painting in 1996. It was part of the railroad’s collection of public area visual art and historical artifacts safeguarded throughout the history of the corporation, including train models, tools, clocks, safety and service awards, and maps. Some pieces – including the Rothko -- have been loaned to museums in the U.S. and abroad for exhibitions.

**UPDATE:** In spite of the NS donation, the 611 will remain at VMT until the remainder of the funding is secured. According to Bev Fitzpatrick, VMT executive director, “[The donation] brings our total to roughly \$2.1 million toward our \$3.5 million goal,” Fitzpatrick adds. “So we are now over halfway there.” The \$3.5 million goal will cover 611’s restoration and the construction of a shop building in Roanoke to maintain the locomotive. Overall, the museum has a roughly \$5 million goal which would include an endowment and other expenses. “We feel comfortable if we can get to \$3.5 million we can move 611 to Spencer” [for restoration].” Fitzpatrick says the museum would like to move 611 to Spencer as quickly as possible to begin restoration. “Our goal would be to try and have it running in 2014.”



## **UNION PACIFIC Big Boy Locomotive Begins Journey from California to Wyoming.**



[Roseville, Calif., November 14, 2013] UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD today announced that "Big Boy" No. 4014 has commenced the second phase of its journey to UP's Heritage Fleet Operations headquarters in Cheyenne, WY, from Fairplex, home of the L.A. County Fairgrounds in Pomona, CA. The 1,260-mile trek began with No. 4014 moving across the Fairgrounds parking lot on temporary track installed specifically for the move, to UP's Colton, CA, rail yard. It marks No. 4014's first move in more than two decades from its home at the RailGiants Train Museum.

"UNION PACIFIC long has played a key role in building America, starting when Abraham Lincoln signed the railroad into existence more than 150 years ago," said Ed Dickens, senior manager - UP Heritage Operations. "Restoring No. 4014 is a great way for us to honor employees past and present while bringing to life UNION PACIFIC's history for rail fans everywhere."

Final travel preparations will be made in Colton, after which No. 4014 will be moved to Cheyenne. The restoration process is expected to take several years and will involve thousands of hours of work by a team of steam locomotive experts.

Following a 20-year operating career, UP delivered No. 4014 to the RailGiants museum in January 1962. The locomotive was one of 25 "Big Boys" built for UP and was used primarily for freight service on the transcontinental railroad route. The locomotive and tender weigh more than 1.2 million pounds and were delivered to UNION PACIFIC in 1941. The travel schedule for No. 4014 will be published in the coming weeks at [www.upsteam.com](http://www.upsteam.com).



## **Tennessee Suspends Short Line Infrastructure Funding.**

Short lines that depend on tax money for track and bridge rehabilitation face a difficult time ahead after the State Transportation Department canceled all projects. Transportation officials took this action in September after a U.S. District Court ruled in favor of CANADIAN NATIONAL subsidiary ILLINOIS CENTRAL, which filed suit in 2010 against the State Revenue Department. In the suit, IC claims the state tax on railroad diesel fuel violates federal law. IC said the 7% tax on fuel was discriminatory and unlawful because railroads were forced to pay a tax not levied on other types of transportation. BNSF and CSX also filed similar suits, and Class I railroads launched separate legal actions to get tax refunds for the past eight years.

The railroad diesel fuel money funded the Short Line Equity Fund, which directs grant money to 22 public rail authorities. The fund collected about \$14 million last year and about \$40 million is in the fund. Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner John Schroer sent out a stop work notice saying that grant money would no longer be available and that contracts would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for current projects.

During the past 35 years, more than 18 new Tennessee short lines were created and more than 800 miles of track were saved from abandonment after Class I railroads deemed them unprofitable. Still, several counties lost all rail service. With millions of dollars no longer available from the trust fund, short line authorities are scrambling to find alternative funding sources.

Several local rail authorities have contacted legislators to seek new legislation. The Tennessee Short Line Railroad Alliance industry trade group is asking to replace the [continued on next page]



existing railroad diesel fuel tax with a flat rate diesel tax equal to what truckers pay. Observers say this is the most equitable solution.

The loss of funding poses a risk to five excursion trains in Eastern and Middle Tennessee and Nashville's Music City Star commuter train if the host railroads are unable to continue to fund proper track maintenance. The NASHVILLE & EASTERN, which hosts the commuter train as well as tourist trains of the Tennessee Central Railway Museum, uses the money to pay off a \$2.5 million loan used to upgrade the tracks for the Lebanon - Nashville service. Other tourist railroads that could be affected are the Three Rivers Rambler, on the KNOXVILLE & HOLSTON RIVER RAILROAD; TENNESSEE VALLEY RAILROAD, with three excursion routes including the ex-LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE Hiwassee Loop line; and Southern Appalachia Railway Museum in Oak Ridge. [Trains Newswire via "Potomac Rail News", Potomac NRHS]



### **SOUTHERN RAILWAY #4501 PASSES HYDRO TEST**

TVRM has completed a successful hydrostatic test of ex-SOUTHERN 2-8-2 #4501 at Soule Shops, a big milestone in the long journey to return the 1911 Baldwin Mikado back to steam. The locomotive's boiler pressure was slowly increased to 257 psi, which will allow for a working pressure of 205 psi, said Mark Ray of the Museum's mechanical department. The locomotive had previously operated at 200 psi. Federal Railroad Administration inspectors gave the engine a look and declared it satisfactory. The Museum crew will drain the boiler and perform an internal inspection. Next for the shop crew is the installation of grates, installation of the fourth driver, and setting up the smokebox interior to prepare for a steam test. [Trains Newswire]

## ***NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2014 ELECTIONS***

The Nominating Committee reports that the following members were elected as 2014 WVRHS&M Officers and Directors:

MIKE TILLEY	PRESIDENT	GARY PRICE	HISTORIAN
BOB SCHUBEL	VICE PRESIDENT	JIM CALHOUN	DIRECTOR (3 YEARS)
JIM SMALLWOOD	SECRETARY	HELEN CALHOUN	DIRECTOR (3 YEARS)
JEANIE WALKER	TREASURER	DON FINDLEY	DIRECTOR (3 YEARS)

## ***Upcoming Events***



**February 7 & 8, 2014:** Southern Rails, a traditional get together not open to the general public offering traditional elements like clinics, contests, vendors and, above all, fun. The meet will be held at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain Georgia. As a plus the family will have the opportunity to visit Callaway Gardens while attending. More information is available at [www.SouthernRails.org](http://www.SouthernRails.org).





**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014:** WVRHS&M will be announcing our 2014 excursion schedule over the next few months at our Membership Meetings. Information will also be posted on our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org/excursions.php>.


## Photo & Video Section




WVRHS&M Historian Gary Price captured the motive power for this year's CSX Santa Train. At point is Huntington Shops rebuilt SD40-3 #4043, trailed by ex-AMTRAK FP40H #9999.

 Whistle Stop contributor Abe Burnett passed along the following historical note. Very similar to the Metro North train accident this past December 1, the "Southern Crescent" train (still being operated by the SOUTHERN RAILWAY before its assumption by AMTRAK) suffered a very similar accident almost 35 years to the day. Both were caused by excessive speed in a curve, with similar fatalities. The wreckage was much worse in the SOUTHERN accident with 1940's vintage passenger equipment. For photos of the SOUTHERN wreck, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ld4ctar>.

 The Fort Wayne Historical Society has recreated a 1940s-era Coca-Cola advertisement featuring their ex-NICKEL PLATE Berkshire Class 2-8-4 steam locomotive #765 (the same engine which served as the model for the "Polar Express" movie.) To view, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2mU6jVcv4w>. Only the most cynical among us won't be touched, if not just a little bit.

 If you think AMTRAK doesn't have a sense of humor, check out <http://tinyurl.com/o4urlxa>.

 For you modelers and kids at heart out there, go to <http://www.nctrr.org/> and check out what's running underneath the National Christmas Tree. [Thanks to Kati Phelps for passing this along.]

***Whistle Stop***

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432  
[wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com)

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the organization 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 the editor and the photographer.

Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



**Watauga Valley RHS & Museum  
P.O. Box 432  
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**TIME VALUE MATERIAL**



# **WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M DUES NOTICE FOR 2014**

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM WILL **EXPIRE** ON DECEMBER 31, 2013. YOU HAVE A CHOICE OF WHICH TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP YOU DESIRE. PLEASE SELECT WHICH MEMBERSHIP YOU CHOOSE AND MAIL THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK (NO CASH, PLEASE) TO WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M, P. O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN.37605-0432. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID YOUR DUES, PLEASE DISREGARD.

**\_\_\_ OPTION 1: WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM**

Dues

Individual Membership \$20.00

Family Membership. \$ 5.00 per each family member \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_ OPTION 2: WATAUGA VALLEY CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Dues

Individual Membership \$70.00

Family Membership \$ 5.00 per each family member \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_ OPTION 3: WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM AND THE RAILROAD HERITAGE ALLIANCE**

Dues

Individual Membership \$35.00

Family Membership \$ 5.00 per each family member \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_ OPTION 4: MEMBERSHIP IN ALL THREE ORGANIZATIONS ABOVE**

Individual Membership \$85.00

Family Membership \$ 5.00 per each family member \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Watauga Valley RHS&M \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (check only, please) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_