

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN's ES44AC SR Heritage unit #8099 leading train 22A at the Hillman Highway crossing between Glade Spring and Emory, VA, headed westbound towards Bristol, VA, passing ballast cars for the on-going Glade Spring siding extension work. [Photo by Mike Pierry, Jr.; used with permission]

September 28th General Membership Meeting

The next WVRHS&M General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, September 28th, starting at 6:30 p.m., and located at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. In this month's program Gary Street will treat us to a fun and informative video on the Tri-State Mountaineer Train Excursion from Grundy, VA to Devon, WV, part of NORFOLK SOUTHERN's 21st Century Steam Excursion Program. Also, you'll be updated on details about our upcoming fall excursions to Asheville, NC and Charlottesville, VA. Bring a friend along for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewel

Our sympathy is extended to Mike and Lois Tilley in the death of Mike's uncle, Robert "Bob" Rose, on September 1, 2015, in Johnson City.

Please keep the following folk in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Jim Calhoun, Sidney Blankenbeckler, Carrie Denny, Gary Price, Bob Yaple, and George and Margaret Holley.

As always, please let us know of any member, friend, or family 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. Your help is always appreciated.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for FALL EXCURSIONS

Volunteers are needed for all areas of our "Autumn Special" excursion trains. If you're interested in volunteering, please sign up at the September meeting.

2016 OFFICER and BoD NOMINATIONS

The WVRHS&M Nominating Committee will be presenting a slate for officers and directors for 2016. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the September meeting. All nominees must meet the following qualifications: he or she has attended 3 general membership meetings since January 1, 2015; and he or she has performed 24 total hours of volunteer work at a WVRHS&M activity since January 1, 2015 (e.g., excursions, coach yard work, museum, or other events). Note that officers and directors are required to attend a specified number of board meetings throughout the year.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

"Clinchfield" business car (WATV 100): An AMTRAK inspector recently inspected Car 100; he stated that the structure on the car was in excellent condition and was a candidate for AMTRAK upgrades. Another type of trucks under the car is needed to meet AMTRAK requirements.

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): At the coach yard for upgrades before heading out Oct 1st for The Autumn Train excursions.

"Moultrie" diner (WATV 400): Floor work and kitchen piping repairs. The Moultrie had an acid bath and looks like it just came out of the shop.

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATV 539) and "St Augustine" coach (WATV 500): Are in mainline excursion service in Macon and Atlanta

SPECIAL NOTICE – CAR CLEANING

We will have passenger car cleaning on Saturday, September 26th, at 9:00 am at the Coach Yard at Spring Street in Jonesborough. Please volunteer to help get our cars ready to hit the road.

Our Mechanical Crew at Work

Maintaining passenger cars capable of safely and reliably performing Class 1 railroad operations is no easy task. Without the fine and dedicated work of our Mechanical Crew, our fleet would be relegated to static display, rusting away, out of sight, in Jonesborough. The few pictures below are but a sampling of their many hours of hard (and volunteer) work. On behalf of WVRHS&M and the hundreds of happy passengers who have ridden these cars over the years, **OUR HATS ARE OFF TO YOU! THANK YOU!**



Left to right: Cline Knowles, Art Devoe, David Denny and Don Findley briefing on work to be preformed on the "Crescent Harbor".



Cline Knowles and Don Findley WATV mechanical team performing inspection of the "Crescent Harbor".



Left to right: Art Devoe, Don Findley, and Cline Knowles getting ready to work on the trucks of the "Crescent Harbor".



Left to right during a recent AMTRAK inspection: Jim Magill, Chief Mechanical Officer; Pete Messina, Amtrak Inspector; Jack Maloney, Mayor of Telford, TN and regular volunteer.

In the News



Chuckey Museum Restoration Update

Progress on the Chuckey Railroad Depot / Museum in Jonesborough is moving right along. Contractors will be arriving on site in the next couple of weeks to install the new metal roof on the structure along with new wiring and heating and air.

CSX Transportation has donated a working mainline signal which will be installed at the entrance to the parking lot to show green if the museum is open and red if it is closed.

We will be accepting volunteers to be greeters at the museum when it opens. Please be thinking about this. Watauga Valley finally has a museum to call its own.



NORFOLK SOUTHERN Depot in Greeneville, TN Endangered!



At press time we have learned that the former SOUTHERN RAILWAY depot in Greeneville TN may be torn down. Currently the building is owned by NORFOLK SOUTHERN which uses it as offices. Interest in Greeneville is mounting to save the depot. We will keep you updated as this story unwinds.



Former ET&WNC Bridge to be Demolished

The former ET&WNC railroad bridge over the Doe River at Blevins, TN, currently used for vehicular traffic, is slated to be demolished due to safety concerns. For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/nq8dfc8>.

 ***Meghan Linsey to Serve as Santa Train Celebrity Guest***

[CSX Press Release] Rising pop star and “The Voice” Season 8 runner-up Meghan Linsey will be the celebrity guest on the Santa Train when it makes its 73rd journey to bring gifts to Appalachian families on Saturday, Nov. 21st. She will accompany Santa and event sponsors CSX, Dignity U Wear, Food City and the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce on the 110-mile trek. Fans can use the hashtag #santatrain15 to engage in the Santa Train conversation on social media.

“I’m honored to be the celebrity guest on this year’s Santa Train,” Linsey said. “This is a wonderful opportunity to give back and be a part of something that has become a holiday tradition for many families, and I am looking forward to being a part of it.”

2015 has been a big year for Linsey, who released her EP titled “Believer” in July. The six-song EP highlights her crossover from country music to pop and debuted at No. 6 on the iTunes pop chart.

“We are so glad to have Meghan Linsey join us on this year’s Santa Train,” said Tori Kaplan, assistant vice president, corporate social responsibility for CSX. “We are thankful for the support we receive each year from our celebrity guests. It’s humbling to see artists add to the holiday cheer the Santa Train brings to the region.” Prior to her appearance on “The Voice,” Linsey was half of the country duo Steel Magnolia, which dominated top charts in 2009. Linsey has had three Top 5 songs on the iTunes all-genre chart, including “Change My Mind,” which she performed as an original song on “The Voice” finale.

The Santa Train makes 14 stops in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee and delivers toys, food and winter clothing to hundreds of children and families along the way.

 ***CSX-NS Trade Locomotives Headed to Idaho***

[Chase Gunnoe, trains.com] In March, CSX and NORFOLK SOUTHERN traded 12 CSX SD80MACs for 12 NS SD40-2s. Following the trade, NS immediately placed the SD80MACs into revenue service, while CSX stored its acquired fleet of SD40-2s at its Huntington Locomotive Shops. CSX renumbered the locomotives into the 8900 series and painted over the NS logos with its YN3b boxcar logo. The unique yellow-on-black scheme piqued interest for enthusiasts who were anxious to see the locomotives enter revenue service.

CSX plans to rebuild all acquired SD40-2s into SD40-3s. The current locomotives will not immediately enter revenue service as originally speculated. Instead, CSX is transporting the locomotives from West Virginia to Idaho for rebuilding into its growing fleet of 4000 series SD40-3s. The first batch of ex-NS SD40-2s, numbers 8901-8904, 8906, and 8909 departed Huntington in late August enroute to Motive Power Inc. in Boise, Idaho for rebuild. The six remaining NS SD40-2’s left Huntington, WV in a move on September 3. Numbers 8900, 8905, 8907-8908, 8910-8911 were included in a deadhead move and handed over to a St. Louis interchange.

 ***Ex-CP Locomotives Back in Canada***

Last month Whistle Stop covered the story on the movement of two former CANADIAN PACIFIC 4-6-2s from Virginia to Canada. It can now be reported that they have arrived safely in Manitoba.

From the Vault



Mike Tilley passes along this 1969 shot of the SOUTHERN RAILWAY's Bluff City, TN depot.



Your Editor captured (early 1980s) North American Rayon's famous "tea kettle", dressed out in Bicentennial colors, performing switching service with the ET&WNC in Elizabethton, TN. While the old Bemberg station in the photo still stands, the NARC plant is gone; rail service in Elizabethton is history; and the 1936 Porter 0-6-0 fireless cooker is now on static display at the east end of town.

Upcoming Events



OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1. NCTM / WVRHS&M Fall AMTRAK excursions. See below.



NOVEMBER 7-8: 27th Annual Railfest model train show, Bluefield, WV. See <http://tinyurl.com/ptndyqs>.



NOVEMBER 21: 73rd Annual CSX "Santa Train" over ex-CLINCHFIELD from Kentucky to Kingsport, TN.



The remaining schedule for this year's 21st Century Steam Program:

SOU #4501

SEP 26-27: Macon – Tennille, GA

OCT 3-4: Atlanta – Toccoa, GA

For ticket information, visit the website of the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum at <http://www.tvrail.com/events-exhibits/rides/21st-century-steam>

FALL AMTRAK EXCURSION TICKETS ON SALE

Tickets are now on sale for NCTM and WVRHS&M autumn rail excursions. Scheduled are "The Blue Ridge Autumn Special" from Spencer to Asheville, NC Saturday, October 31st and "The Virginia Autumn Special" from Spencer to Charlottesville, VA on Sunday, November 1st. For detailed trip descriptions and ticket ordering, go to <http://www.nctrans.org/Events/Autumn-Train-Excursions-2015.aspx>.

VISIT WATAUGA VALLEY ON FACEBOOK

You're invited to visit Watauga Valley's Facebook page, hosted by Gary Price. You get news faster than a monthly newsletter and you'll see great photos for which there just isn't room in the Whistle Stop. To date we have nearly 600 folk who have friended us. Finding us is easy: search for "Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum".

For Your Viewing Pleasure

Sunday River Productions (<http://www.sundayriverproductions.com/norfolk-western/>) has just released two new videos related to current and past N&W steam locomotives:

611 Forever: Pride of the Norfolk & Western 1950s, 1980s, & 2015

History unfolds as number 611, the only surviving Norfolk & Western "J" Class 4-8-4 engine, roars down the rails. History in living color, then and now, including the 2015 resteam!

Norfolk & Western BIG STEAM: Articulated Y & A Class in the 1950s

This DVD replaces the title, "Norfolk & Western Articulateds," with a new version refreshed by digital image processing, meticulously reorganized by class and location, and with additional, never before seen film footage from our vaults.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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