

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Photographer Mike Pierry, Jr. captured a southbound NS freight passing the recently restored exterior of the N&W station at Rural Retreat, VA. We look forward to the not-too-distant future when the cover photo will showcase trains passing WVRHS&M's restored depot and museum in Jonesborough, TN.

February 22nd Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership Meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, February 22nd, 2016 at the Johnson City Public Library 101 West Millard St. Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will be the second part of a DVD series of the return to steam of ex-N&W J Class 611, presented by Mike Noonkester This promises to be one of the best programs that we have had for some time. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your fellow railfans.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewel

The cold February weather isn't ideal for traveling but we can all look forward to spring events. Keep us posted on you jaunts, please.

A reminder to keep the following folk in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: George and Margaret Holley, Jim Calhoun, Gary Price, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Smallwood, Art DeVoe, Sidney Blankenbeckler, and Bob Yapple.

As always, let us know of any members, friends, 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 needed and appreciated.

Welcome Aboard New Members!

Brad E & Elizabeth K Lowans Orange Park FL
Donald Beck Surgoinsville, TN
Wilbur & Pat Craft, Jr. Church Hill, TN.

ELECTRONIC VERSION OF NEWSLETTER

We continue to ask members receiving paper copies to switch over to the electronic version of the Whistle Stop. The electronic version is in living color and the quality is so much better than the printed copy. It also has active links to referenced web sites. Please try it! Call the office (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com and give us your e-mail address so you can start receiving this improved version and help us save money!

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2016

The WVRHS&M Program Committee is looking for General Membership programs for 2016. Please call 423-753-5797 if you have an interest in showing a program this year. We are also looking for speakers should you know of someone that would come and present a railroad related program. And as always were looking for DVD and slide shows.

For Your Viewing Pleasure ...



Railfan Eric Miller, a lifelong resident of Southwest Virginia, has posted some beautiful photos, along with accompanying text, of CSX operations over the ex-CLINCHFIELD at <http://tinyurl.com/htq6rqz>.



Want a fun way to "ride the rails"? Try biking and experiencing rail travel on a bike! The ADIRONDAC SCENIC RAILROAD of Utica, NY has partnered with Rail Explorers to provide a unique way to ride the rails and experience a railroad ride like none other. Check out <http://www.railexplorers.net/>.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

The bad weather has taken its toll on the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team's efforts in working at the yard over the last several weeks. Hopefully the weather will turn around and we can get some of the work done that was planned for the spring.

We have renewed interest in expanding the capacity of the Spring Street Coach Yard. Details will be announced in the coming weeks. The expansion of the yard will be required to store our newest piece of equipment – the Clinchfield 100.

We are looking for volunteers on Tuesdays and Saturdays to help maintain our passenger cars. If your spouse wants you out of the house after a long winter, please call the office any time (line open 24 hours a day) and leave message at 423-753-5797.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): Is having some upgrades on the interior of the car including lights, seats and general repairs. New Head End Power cable is being installed on the car.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): Has arrived back at the Spring St. Coach Yard to finish some work. The Mechanical Team is going to replace the main holding tank on the car. Seat work is ongoing with repairs. New pictures will be put up in the car on each end of the bulk head.



Left: Cline Knowles and Art DeVoe hard at work on seat repair on the St. Augustine. Right: An idea of just what is involved in car maintenance.

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): Has been on the Valentine Special at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. It will be returning back to Jonesborough to have some major kitchen restoration work done.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): Is getting some new wiring and upholstery work done. A new fan motor/blowing is being installed in the car to repair a bad bearing making a sound.

In the News

JONESBOROUGH DEPOT and MUSEUM



Photo: Mike Tilley



Photo: Bobby Hand

Photos above: two views of the new roof. Plans are to start back with the Heating / Air Conditioning and wiring soon. Craig Ford, manager of the Depot / Museum Restoration Project, said he hopes to have the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum ready to move into the building by the first of June. Anyone who wants to donate items to be considered for display in the museum should call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797

N&W #611 Receiving New Front Truck Bearings



Photo: Scott Lindsay

Earlier this month Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 #611 traveled from its long-time home at the Virginia Museum of Transportation to NORFOLK SOUTHERN's Shaffers Crossing locomotive shop for the work to replace its front truck bearings. Bearing maker Brengo, of Petersburg, Va., donated the bearings. "We knew early on that it would needed to

be replaced," museum Executive Director Bev Fitzpatrick said back in December. "But it was okay for the first excursion season." The standard bearings on the front truck will be converted from an oil bath to grease and will be cooled by ambient air temperature. The total cost for the work is expected to between \$150,000 to \$200,000, which is covered in the original restoration budget. Fitzpatrick says that the truck will still look like the current one to the casual observer. The photo at left shows the completed assembly being lifted for placement on the truck table. From there, the truck was raised to its correct location under the locomotive.]

 *More #611 News ...*

[Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., VMT Executive Director]

We are excitedly preparing the Class J 611 for her 2016 excursions. For starters, the engine truck wheel sets have been successfully replaced. The old wheel sets were originally installed around 1957 and saw extensive operations. They are now in storage, but we anticipate putting them on display.

The next step is the required annual Federal Railway Administration inspection. This work will take place at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. Visitors to the NCTM will be able to watch this work like they did the restoration last year.

We fired up 611 on February 9, and she'll travel to Spencer leaving early on February 11. 611 will stay in Spencer until the start of excursions in April. We are grateful to Scott Lindsay, our chief mechanical officer, to our volunteers, and to Brenco Bearings, Precision Steel, and Norfolk Southern for all their help!

 *Steam Locomotive No. 2102 Slated to Return in Service*

Photo: readingrailroad.org

The READING BLUE MOUNTAIN AND NORTHERN RAILROAD has begun work on restoring #2102. The RBMN T-1 with a 4-8-4 wheel arrangement originally was constructed in Reading, PA in 1945, and has seen a very rich

history to this point. The next two years will become pivotal in the locomotive's much anticipated return to service. The tender was split from the locomotive on January 7 followed by work commencing on January 9. The front end is out and work has started in the cab. The cab along with all jacketing, piping, superheater units, tubes and flues will be removed. The locomotive will be disassembled far enough to perform complete ultrasonic testing and inspection. Once that is complete, the goal is to perform the FRA Form 4 "1472" inspection.

Andy Muller, Jr., owner and CEO of the rail company anticipates the T-1 to be operational by mid-2017. According to Matt Fisher, General Manager of the railroad's passenger division, "the total amount of ridership in 2015 hit 100,000 people. This is approximately 30 percent higher than our previous year's ridership. The amount of ticket sales and interest in riding trains is phenomenal. Impressive ridership numbers along with the amount of teamwork and determination by employees of the railroad has made it a perfect time to begin working on 2102."

The steam locomotive is housed at the Port Clinton [PA] shops less than 20 miles north of Reading on the former READING Company mainline. Port Clinton is also the headquarters of the RBMN railroad. "The opportunities are endless to use no. 2102 in special excursion service on both the RBMN and related tourist railroad LEHIGH GORGE SCENIC RAILWAY," said Fisher. [From READING BLUE MOUNTAIN AND NORTHERN RAILROAD]

 *C&O #2716 to be Restored for Operation*



Photo: Jim Wrinn


[trains.com] A non-profit Kentucky group says its members will restore CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 2-8-4 #2716 to operating condition. The Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp.'s announcement comes almost 20 years after the big Kanawha-type locomotive last operated in the 1990s. The locomotive is owned by the Kentucky Railway Museum and has been restored to operation on two different occasions: once by the SOUTHERN RAILWAY in the 1980s and once by the Fort

Wayne Railroad Historical Society in 1996.

This week, the group signed a long-term lease for the locomotive. Group members expect to move the engine to the Lexington [KY] area later this year. Chris Campbell, president and founder of the KSHC, told Trains News Wire that the group hopes to have the engine steamed up by 2020. The restoration is expected to cost between \$800,000 and \$1.3 million.

No. 2716 was one of 90 Kanawhas purchased by the C&O between 1943 and 1947 for use in both freight and passenger service. Today, a dozen of the locomotives remain but only #2716 has ever run in the preservation era, albeit on two separate but brief occasions. When the locomotive was first restored by the SOUTHERN in 1982, it was given a makeover to look more like that road's own locomotives, even though the SOUTHERN never had 2-8-4s. The C&O veteran was among the first "Superpower" locomotives used in SOUTHERN's steam program and Campbell says that is one of the reasons why the group selected it for restoration.

Upcoming Events

	APRIL 2: Spring 2016 Scenic Hiwassee River Excursion. Etowah – Copperhill, TN. Details included.
	APRIL 2: Great Eastern Divide Narrow Gauge Train Show (modeling), 4801 Merriman Road, Roanoke, VA. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#611's 2016 EXCURSION SCHEDULE

- April 9: "The Virginian", Spencer, NC to Lynchburg, VA
- April 10: "The Blue Ridge Special", Spencer, NC to Asheville, NC ***** SOLD OUT *****
- April 23-24: "The Roanoker", Greensboro, NC to Roanoke, VA. ***** SOLD OUT *****
- May 7-8: "The Powhatan Arrow", Roanoke, VA to Lynchburg, VA
- May 7-8: "The Pelican", Roanoke, VA to Walton (Radford), VA
- June 4: "The American", Manassas, VA to Front Royal, VA (runs once)
- June 5: "The American", Manassas, VA to Front Royal, VA (runs twice)

From the WVRHS&M Archives ...



WVRHS&M “Moultrie” which just joined AMTRAK service in 1972 at Ivy City (Washington, DC). [RRPicturesArchives.net photo]



W

WRHS&M’s ex-N&W coach WATX 539 (farthest from camera) at much less happier times. The scene is from the 1956 wreck of the “Powhatan Arrow”, powered by J Class #611, along the Tug Fork near Cedar, WV. [photo attribution: unknown]

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL

SPRING TRAIN EXCURSION – THROUGH THE BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum is pleased to announce its Spring 2016 Rail Excursion through the Scenic Hiwassee River Gorge to the mining town of Copperhill in East Tennessee. We have never done the trip all the way to Copperhill. Excursion date is set for Saturday, April 2, 2016. The excursion will offers an opportunity to ride the rails through the one of the most beautiful river gorges in the United States as the railroad tracks travel along the Hiwassee River all the way to Copperhill, TN. The rail trip will take a 50-mile, 3-1/2 hour round trip rail excursion along this beautiful river to the famous "Hiwassee Loop" After traversing the river gorge and negotiating the spiral near Farner, the train continues through Turtletown and Ducktown to the former mining town of Copperhill, TN/McCaysville, GA.

The special attraction of the trip is traveling through the Narrows, where the Hiwassee River flows through rock channels, and the Bald Mountain Loop. The track actually passes over itself on a high trestle during a corkscrew climb up the mountain near Farner, TN. Tracks along this route parallel the river for most of its length, providing views of the lower gorge. After we leave Copperhill via motor coach, passenger will get to view the beautiful Ocoee River Gorge

The railroad was originally built to haul ore from the copper basin in Copper Hill, TN. Regularly scheduled passenger trains operated over this line until 1968; the last freight train traveled the "Old Line" in 2001. The Tennessee Overhill Association took over ownership of the rail line in 2004. This will be a very unique opportunity to ride on this historic railroad.

General Coach seating is offered on this excursion, providing passengers with comfortable cushioned seats with large windows. Historic 1950's-era diesel locomotives will pull the vintage enclosed climate-controlled coaches with rest rooms on each car. Snack items are available for sale on the train including: soft drinks, coffee, water, chips, crackers, and candy bars. Souvenirs are sold onboard including: t-shirts, caps, and books. A loading ramp is available at the train boarding location and in Copperhill.

We are happy to announce for 2016 we will have the First class car "Algonquin Park" which offers high-level dome and comfortable observation lounge seating. Dome seating allows passengers a panoramic view of the passing scenery from high above the car. Observation lounge seating gives passengers a unique view of the passing railroad from the end of the car which will be on the rear of

the train. Both seating options in "Algonquin Park" include complimentary snack service.

Our trip will begin in downtown Johnson City, TN at 7:15 am on the morning of April 2 at The Big Burley Parking Lot at 104 Legion St. (corner of State of Franklin and Legion St.) where passengers will board a motor coach to Etowah, TN. We will also pick up passengers at the Sleep Solution Mattress Gallery parking lot at 2030 E. Andrew Johnson Hwy, Greeneville, TN, at 7:45 am as well as passengers in Morristown, TN at 8:15 am at the Expo Center Parking lot near the exit of I-81 and US 25E. A map will be included with tickets to your designated parking area. Lunch will be on your own at restaurants in Athens, TN before we get to the train boarding site at 12:45 pm for a 1:00 pm departure. The train will depart Copperhill at 3:30 pm. Our motor coaches will depart Copperhill at 3:45 pm with expected arrival back at Morristown at 7:15 pm, Greeneville at 7:45 pm and Johnson City at 8:15 pm. The motor coaches will make a food stop during the return trip.

Ticket cost:

Deluxe Coach _ \$94.00 per Adult and \$84.00 per Child.

Observation - \$120.00 per Adult and \$110 per child

Dome Class - \$150.00 per Adult and \$140 per child

(Note: Observation & Dome Class are very limited)

Please specify if you will accept an alternate class of service if your choice is sold out. You will be refunded the difference. Money will be refunded if you do not wish an alternate service.

Ticket includes train ride and motor coach to and from Etowah, TN. Meals are not included. To order tickets, send a check or money order (sorry, cash or credit cards not accepted) along with the number of tickets you're purchasing to Spring 2015 Rail Excursion, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. A printable order form is available ON LINE at www.wataugavalleynrhs.org click on excursions. Please be sure to tell us whether you're boarding the motor coach in Johnson City, Greeneville or Morristown. For questions about the trip e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com or phone our ticket office at (423) 753-5797 call between the hours of 9am – 4 pm.