

Whistle Stop



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

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Watauga Valley member Kevin Gilliam caught the star of eastern steam excursions working a grade at Jamestown, NC, powering its way to Lynchburg, VA on April 9th.

May 23rd Membership Meeting

The WVRHS&M will conduct our monthly General Membership Meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, May 23rd, 2016 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. This month's program is a MUST SEE! Lou Nelson, who worked on the American Freedom Train, will present a video on the train, one of the greatest railroading events of the 20th Century. For 21 months this 25 car steam powered train crisscrossed the nation, carrying with it over 500 artifacts significant in the shaping of America. Over 7 million people toured the American Freedom Train on its 25,833 mile journey to all 48 continental states. In Texas, former TEXAS & PACIFIC 2-10-4 #610 was restored to pull the train through the Lone Star state. The train's interior is revisited on the trip through the Midwest on its way to closing day in Miami on New Year's Eve. The story of this incredible journey is illustrated by hundreds of never-before-seen photographs by the train's staff, designers, builders and the railfans who chased it!

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewel

It has been a quiet month with nothing to report. 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.

BRISTOL TRAIN STATION NATIONAL TRAIN DAY

The National Train Day event was held for the first time at the Bristol Train Station on Saturday, May 14, 2016. Speakers discussing the plans to bring AMTRAK service to Bristol in 2019 as well as Operation Life Saver and vendors were on hand. WVRHS&M had 14 volunteers to man our tables, handing out railroad material, excursion and membership information. The attendance at the event was larger than expected and, despite AMTRAK pulling its support nationwide, organizers are already planning for next year.

FUTURE WVRHS&M RAIL EXCURSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC

Watauga Valley RHS&M and the North Carolina Transportation Museum will operate an excursion to Washington DC on July 7 through July 10. More details about the trip will be announced very soon. If you're interested in purchasing tickets for this trip, please call the North Carolina Transportation Museum at (704) 636-2889. Museum cars to be used on the trip are the St Augustine and Powhatan Arrow.

SUMMER EXCURSION ON THE GSMR

The Watauga Valley RHS&M announced recently that our Summer Excursion will be on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad in Bryson City, NC on Saturday, August 13, 2016. Tickets will go on sale soon; a sign up sheet for car hosts will be available at the May membership meeting.

FALL AMTRAK EXCURSION

This year's Fall AMTRAK Excursion, always a very popular event, will be operated on October 29th from Spencer, NC to Charlottesville, VA and on Sunday, October 30th from Spencer to Toccoa, GA. Car Host sign up forms will be available soon.

VISIT WATAUGA VALLEY ON FACEBOOK

You're invited to visit Watauga Valley's Facebook page, hosted by Gary Price. You get news faster than the 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".

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

Since all of our equipment is out on the 611 excursions, we are in a spring cleaning mode of the yard, storage trailers and the new supply building. To view photos of the work on the yard extension, go to our Facebook page.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATV 539): Car is up North in the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program.

“St Augustine” coach (WATV 500): Car is up North in the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program.

“Moultrie” diner (WATV 400): Car is in operation at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Just came off the 611 trips to Lynchburg and Asheville

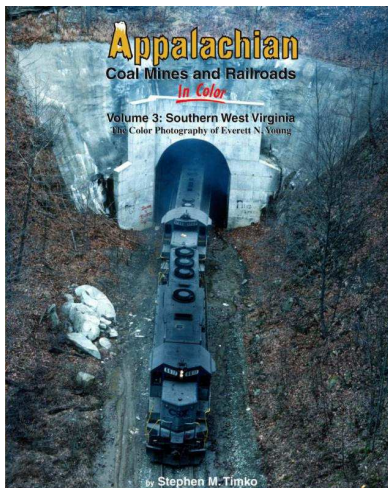
“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): Is in operation at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Just came off the 611 trips to Lynchburg and Asheville in April.

“Clinchfield” business car (WATV 100): The search committee is looking for a set of trucks to get the car AMTRAK certified.

SOUTHERN caboose (X450): Finally after 10 years of storage, our caboose X450 may be getting a paint job in the near future. The caboose was purchased in 2005 from the City of Morristown, TN landfill. The car has a lot of surface rust but overall it’s still in good condition. WVRHS&M is planning on contracting the paint work out. Plans are to put the car on display in Jonesborough later this year. Hopefully, we will soon have a beautiful red restored caboose that everyone can enjoy.

For Your Reading Enjoyment ...

Just released:



**Appalachian Coal Mines and Railroads In Color
Volume 3: Southern West Virginia
The Color Photography of Everett N. Young**

Morning Sun Books has just released the third book in its series of coal mining and railroading in Appalachia. This pictorial offers a visit to the southern region of the Mountain State, reviewing the trains and coal mining facilities through the camera lens of noted photographer Everett N. Young. Examples of photos are NS operations such as the two interchange points at Gilbert and the line connection with the former VIRGINIAN south of Beckley. By Stephen M. Timko. Hard cover, 128 pages. You can find the

book on Amazon or through the publisher.

The first two books in the series covered the states of Kentucky (Vol. 1) and Virginia (Vol. 2).

In the News



JONESBOROUGH DEPOT and MUSEUM



As most everyone knows, the Jonesborough Depot and Museum is a team effort of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum (WVRHS&M), Railroad Heritage Alliance and the Town of Jonesborough. WVRHS&M received word back in 2010 that owners of the ex-SOUTHERN Chuckey, TN depot were going to have to tear the building down due to the railroad needing the property. WVRHS&M stepped in, got the Town of Jonesborough involved and the depot was saved. The depot was dismantled piece by piece and stored in moving trailers for about

three years. In 2015, the town started reconstructing the depot. The completion date is expected in June of this year. We are hoping that the depot will be open for public view in July with an opening date of October for one of the best railroad museums in the region.



STEAM RETURNS to GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD!

After long awaited anticipation, GSMR'S historic steam locomotive #1702 has returned to the rails and will be operating July - December of the 2016 season, servicing the Nantahala Gorge and Tuckasegee River excursions. The Consolidation class 2-8-0 steam locomotive, built by Baldwin in 1942 for the U.S. Army during World War II, was acquired by GSMR around 1994 for service on tourist trains. Taken out of service at the end of the 2004 season, it was hoped that the engine would be restored and returned to service, although no definite plans were set. In October 2013 an "historic agreement" was reached between GSMR and Swain County (NC) to begin restoration of #1702. A new shop, especially built for the restoration, was completed the following year. In March of this year it was announced that #1702 would return to summer service, which coincided with the construction and usage of a new turn-table for the locomotive near the depot in Bryson City. For information, see <http://www.gsmr.com/steam>.



AMTRAK COMING to ROANOKE in 2017

[WSLS-TV, Roanoke, VA] Roanoke's City Council unanimously passed a plan for the city to vacate a 985 foot area along Norfolk Avenue adjacent to NORFOLK SOUTHERN rails, selling it to NS for 10 dollars. Once ownership transfers to NS, construction on a new boarding platform can begin. "A lot of the Millennials don't own automobiles anymore [...] our culture here is rapidly changing to walking and bicycling as means of transportation, and having bicycles on the train coming to Roanoke is a fantastic opportunity for the Roanoke Valley," said bicycle-advocate Barbara Duerk, who commented at the meeting. The Council first announced it was working on a deal to bring AMTRAK to Roanoke in 2014.

The boarding platform was the last hurdle in getting the deal approved by the state. The new platform will support a nine car AMTRAK train that will travel between Roanoke and Lynchburg. Service is expected to begin next year.



NORFOLK SOUTHERN REDUCING KNOXVILLE OPERATIONS

[NS Press Release] Norfolk Southern Corp. announced on April 20 that it will reduce train operations at its Knoxville, TN rail yard, effective May 1. The action is in response to lower traffic volumes and is consistent with the company's ongoing implementation of its strategic plan to enhance operating efficiencies, reduce costs, drive profitability, and support long-term growth. NS remains on track to achieve its previously announced annual expense savings of more than \$650 million and an operating ratio below 65 percent by 2020.

NS plans to idle switching operations at the rail yard, where freight cars from inbound trains are sorted by destination and assembled into outbound trains. As part of the change in operations, train traffic will decrease at the yard, reducing the need for personnel and infrastructure associated with train operations and maintenance activities. The Knoxville terminal will continue to serve as a hub for through-train operations and provide safe, reliable service to local customers, and NS has developed an operating plan to minimize any customer impact.

Knoxville will continue to serve as headquarters for the company's Central Division, which includes 1,100 track miles primarily in Tennessee and Kentucky. Although approximately 135 positions will be impacted by the reduction of operations at the yard, nearly 300 employees in Knoxville will continue to support division operations and manage yard traffic. NS will assist impacted employees by offering them opportunities to fill job vacancies as they become available across the system.



GROUP SEEKS to RESTORE NC&StL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

[The Tennessean, Nashville] The Nashville Steam Preservation Society wants to make an agreement with Metro Parks to restore to working order NC&StL Class J3-57 4-8-4 locomotive #576, donated to the City in September 1953 and sitting at Centennial Park since. #576 was one of the last steam engines built in the country; it was used to haul troops and oil during World War II. The projected, roughly \$3 million project would take four to six years to complete.

On May 3, NSPS made a presentation to the Metro Nashville Parks Board regarding the organization's proposal, highlighting NSPS plans and emphasizing the benefits that a "living," operational steam locomotive could have to Nashville, not only from a tourism standpoint, but also from an historical preservation and railroad heritage perspective. Following the presentation, one Park Board member outlined the importance of preserving the locomotive in the face of increasing deterioration brought on by 60 years in the elements. The Park Board appeared positive on the proposal as a whole, and has decided to provide an additional month's time for consideration, allowing its Acquisition Committee the opportunity to review the plan in detail. All signs point to a vote on the matter at the next Metro Nashville Parks Board meeting in early June.

If successful, #576 will be moved to the Tennessee Central Railway Museum near Rolling Hill Mill, where the group will make parts or add commissioned parts to replace corroded ones. Once completed, the locomotive is planned to pull the Museum's 14 restored '50s-era passenger cars to carry passengers on the Nashville & Eastern Railroad. It would operate 20-30 times a year. For further information: <http://www.nashvillesteam.org>.

AMTRAK Announces the End of the Printed System Timetable

For several years AMTRAK has simultaneously produced the AMTRAK System Timetable in printed form and as an electronic downloadable document housed on AMTRAK's web site. The decision has been made to discontinue production of the printed AMTRAK System Timetable effective immediately. The final printed timetable is the January 2016 Winter/Spring version recently printed.

The reasons for this decision are:

1. Usage and demand for the printed document have steadily declined over the past five years.
2. Surveys have revealed that few customers want or use the printed System Timetable and expressed a preference to access information on line.
3. Schedules, policies and programs are ever changing and it's impossible to keep the printed document accurate and up-to-date.
4. Reducing print is financially responsible
5. Reducing print is environmentally responsible

All AMTRAK timetables, including the System Timetable are housed within and may be accessed on <https://www.amtrak.com>. At this time many of the smaller individual route and corridor wallet cards and panels will continue to be printed. For those interested in researching all AMTRAK timetables since Day One (May 1, 1971) you can visit <http://www.timetables.org>.

HISTORIC LOCOMOTIVE "YORK" RETURNS to B&O MUSEUM

[“The Timetable”, Washington, DC NRHS] On April 6th a debut reception was held for the return of the B&O Railroad Locomotive "York" to the B&O Museum in Baltimore. The York is a 1926 replica of the 1831 B&O Railroad Locomotive "York" built by the B&O's own Mt. Clare Shops in Baltimore for "The Fair of the Iron Horse". The Fair was the two-week long extravaganza held at Halethorpe, MD, in the fall of 1927 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the B&O Railroad. The York was one of three replica early B&O locomotives built for the Fair and the acquisition of the replica completes the return of the trio to the museum. The original York was built in York, PA, by Phineas Davis, a jeweler who won a design contest with the locomotive and a job as a B&O locomotive builder.



York was a four-wheel, vertical boiler locomotive with a short wheel base similar to Cooper's "Tom Thumb." It featured a pair of vertical cylinders that drove vertical main rods that connected to horizontal side rods, which powered the wheels. Designed to burn anthracite coal, the York was deemed the most successful of the five locomotives in the competition and after some alterations entered service on the B&O where it hauled passenger trains on the line from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills (now Ellicott City), MD. In July 1831, it was reported to have hauled a five car train with 150 passengers on board. It was capable of hauling 15 tons at 15 mph on level track and could reach speeds of 30 mph, truly impressive statistics for the period.

For Your Viewing Enjoyment ...

Planning some travel this summer? Well, before you book that flight and expose yourself to the discomfort and abuse of modern air travel, view these classic videos on how we once traveled by rail in style and comfort. They're guaranteed to make your flying experience even worse.

BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD Passenger Train

Enjoy a journey on a streamline B&O train in 1940's style! You'll see various scenes from inside the train and also from trackside, and learn about the many different jobs required to keep the train running and the passengers comfortable and happy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV3Ydb1yazg>

The "20th Century Limited"

A promotional film made in 1935 by the NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD. Features a journey on the "20th Century Limited", once claimed to be America's premier train.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcC9laB3UFU>

The "Super Chief"

A 1950's publicity film from the SANTA FE RAILWAY featuring the "Super Chief" luxury passenger train which ran between Chicago and Los Angeles.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI_LoQ4vHDC

The "Olympian Hiawatha"

Take a 1950's MILWAUKEE ROAD luxury train trip from Chicago to Seattle on the "Super Dome Olympian Hiawatha". Video offers footage of the diner, coaches, Super Dome, sky top car, and sleepers, running along the Wisconsin Dells, the Mississippi River, and the electrified territory in the mountains. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQupCrYLLbk>

The "California Zephyr"

1950's promotional film featuring the "California Zephyr" Vista Dome train running between Chicago and San Francisco. Film covers the three railroads the train traveled over (BURLINGTON ROUTE, RIO GRANDE and WESTERN PACIFIC). Plenty of trackside footage as well as scenes filmed inside the diner, sleeper and Vista Dome observation cars.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PuhljJlyjI>

Back Issues of the Whistle Stop

Did you know you can view back issues of the Whistle Stop, starting with the January 2009 issue, which is when we first went digital? To view, go to <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/newsletterarchive.php>. And while we're at it, if you're not receiving your copy of our newsletter electronically, why not switch over now? Besides getting photos in beautiful color, you also get active links to sites mentioned in articles. And you will receive it about week in advance of the hard copy. Call us today at (423) 753-5797 to switch over!

Upcoming Events

	MAY 19-22: N&W Historical Society Convention, Hilton Garden Inn, Pikeville, KY. Info: http://www.nwhs.org/convention/2016pikeville/
	JUNE 4 & 5: "The American", #611 excursions between Manassas and Front Royal, VA. Info: http://tinyurl.com/j2kggh9 .
	JUNE 12: "The Varsity", ex-NKP #765 2-8-4 powered steam excursion in the Chicago area. Info: https://fortwaynerrailroad.org/faq
	JUNE 25: 13th North Carolina Rail Fair, Metrolina Expo Center, Building 1, Charlotte, NC. Info: http://www.gserr.com/shows.htm
	JULY 7-10: "The Capital City Special", WVRHS&M and NCTM excursion to Washington, DC. Info: http://tinyurl.com/jb5wda9
	JULY 16 & 17: Cass Scenic Railfan Weekend, The Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association will be hosting a new photography venue in conjunction with a DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY RAILROAD event. Info: http://www.msrlha.org/
	JULY 19-24: NRHS National Convention, Denver, CO. Info: http://nrhs.com/content/2016-convention
	AUGUST 13: WVRHS&M Summer Excursion over the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD. Info: http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php
	AUGUST 13: The Blue Ridge NRHS sponsored 38 th Annual Model Train and Railroadiana Show and Sale, Lynchburg, VA. Info: http://www.blueridgenrhs.org
	OCTOBER 29 & 30: WVRHS&M and NCTM Fall AMTRAK excursions from Spencer, NC to Charlottesville, VA and Toccoa, GA.

Farewell to the AEM-7 Excursion Train



Since 1980, the iconic AEM-7 electric locomotives have distinguished themselves carrying passengers between Washington, Philadelphia, New York, New Haven, Boston, Harrisburg and everywhere in between. Now, after 37 years and over 220 million miles of service, they are being replaced by the new, advanced next-generation Siemens Cities Sprinter locomotives.

On Saturday, June 18, 2016, in giving a proper sendoff to these true workhorses of America's Passenger Railroad, AMTRAK will salute these remarkable machines with a special Farewell to the AEM-7 Excursion. For complete trip information and ordering instructions, go to: <https://www.amtrak.com/farewell-to-the-aem7-excursion-train>.

Photos ...



Just can't get enough of the 611 under steam. This magnificent May 7th shot of the locomotive climbing Southwest Virginia's Blue Ridge grade trailing a dramatic plume of smoke was taken by railfan Brian Crosier.

Mike Noonkester - 1981



Member Kevin Gilliam posted on our Facebook page this Mike Noonkester shot at Benhams, VA of the short-lived BRISTOL & NORTH WESTERN tourist railroad. The B&NW operated on an unused section of the SOUTHERN's Bristol to Appalachia line during 1981, shut down for several years, and was reopened for a few weekends in October 1984 before closing for good. Ex-CB&W 2-8-2 #4960 would spend considerable time in storage before resurfacing with a much different look at the GRAND CANYON RAILROAD in Arizona. The car behind the diesel is none other than our Moultrie diner during its previous life on the B&NW.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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