

# Whistle Stop



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

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Action at the Coach Yard. Mike Tilley snapped two NS Heritage diesels, ES44AC #8099 in SOUTHERN livery, and SD70Ace #1068 in ERIE colors, rolling through Jonesborough on a fine spring day.

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## *April 27<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting Canceled*

Due to COVID-19, the Johnson City Public Library will be closed through the month of April, which of course means the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will have to cancel our Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. We are hoping to have our May meeting which will be moved up one week due to the Memorial Day Holiday. The May meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Members will receive notification verifying this meeting; details will be included in the next newsletter.

## *Member Notes*

*by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson*

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are Gary Price, Nancy Jewell, George Ritchie, Don and Diana Brewer, Anita Johnson, Bob Hand, Mike and Art Devoe. As always, let us know any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-4612. Continue to remember the members and families who have lost loved ones. Please remember Art Devoe in the loss of his beloved pet this week.

Please keep Mike Noonkester in your prayers in the recent death of his brother.

We have no new members at this time. If you know of someone who did not renew their membership encourage them to rejoin. If you know of someone who would make a good volunteer, we would like to have them join.

Hope everyone is enjoying the beauty of this spring season and maybe things will be back to normal soon.

## *WVRHS&M 2020 Rail Excursions*

### **SPRING 2020 GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN TRIPS**

As posted in the last *Whistle Stop*, the Great Smoky Mountains Trip that was scheduled to operate on March 28<sup>th</sup> was canceled due to COVID-19 and has been rescheduled to Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. The majority of the passengers have opted to transfer their tickets to that trip. As of press time, it was decided that the Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> trip would be canceled and rescheduled for Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. May 16<sup>th</sup> passengers have been contacted and asked if they would be willing to transfer to the September 12<sup>th</sup> date.

### **VOLUNTEER HOSTS NEEDED FOR SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER EXCURSIONS**

All members interested in hosting the September 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> trips on the Great Smoky Mountain excursions are asked to email [wataugavalley@embarqmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embarqmail.com) stating your name and specifying which day(s) you want to volunteer.

## *Whistle Truck*



The Watauga Valley's Whistle Truck has been parked due to COVID-19; we hope a 2020 schedule can be issued soon. At left we see an event goer enjoying the unique experience of blowing an authentic train whistle.



## *Mechanical Department Report*

### *by Jim Magill*

All work sessions at the Spring Street Coach Yard have been canceled due to COVID-19. We hope to get cranked back up soon; all mechanical members will be notified when work resumes.

If you would like to help out at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesdays between 9 am to 5 pm or Saturdays 9 am to 12 noon, please call the WVRHS&M Office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@embarqmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embarqmail.com).

### ROLLING STOCK

“*Powhatan Arrow*” coach (WATX 539), “*Moultrie*” diner (WATX 400): both cars parked at the North Carolina Transportation Museum during COVID-19.

“*St Augustine*” coach (WATX 500), “*Crescent Harbor*” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): both cars at the Jonesborough Spring St Coach Yard awaiting repairs.



“*Cinchfield 100*” office car (WATX 100): a new platform railing has been installed, making it safer for passengers to ride on the platform. Leading the effort were Mike Dowdy and Gary Lombardi.

## *Chuckey Depot and Museum*

Due to COVID-19 and the directive from the Town of Jonesborough, the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum has been closed for a month and a half. We are hoping that the museum will be back open sometime in May. All Museum hosts will be notified when we will get cranked back up. If you're interested in taking the host training for the depot, please call the Watauga Valley Office at (423) 753-5797.

### VIRTUAL RAIL FAN CAM AT THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

Sheltering at home doesn't mean you can't enjoy railfanning. You can virtually enjoy rail action on the NS A Line by visiting either (1) [www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org) or (2) going to <https://www.youtube.com/> and entering “Jonesborough Rail Cam”. There are also two live NS radios operating at [www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org) or at <http://broadcastify.com>. To assist in your viewing, trains on the A line between Bristol and Bulls Gap are listed on the next page:

- T23 Limits Greeneville to Bulls Gap local switching 7am to 4pm
- T24 Limits Greeneville to Johnson City local switching 8pm to 6pm
- 15T Allentown PA to Birmingham AL morning train 7am to 11am
- 16T Birmingham AL to Allentown PA morning train 7am to 11am
- 22A Intermodal Norfolk VA to Louisville, KY afternoon 4pm to 7pm
- 23G Intermodal Louisville, KY to Norfolk VA morning Train 6am to 12noon

- 201 Intermodal New Jersey to Rossville, AL Morning Train 7am to 11am
- 202 Intermodal Rossville AL to New Jersey afternoon train 3pm to 8pm
- 125 Roanoke VA to Chattanooga, TN sets off at Radford, VA Bristol, Jonesborough.
- 126 Chattanooga, TN to Roanoke, VA sets off at Radford, VA Bristol, Jonesborough.
- 800 series train are coal trains

Many listeners have requested a list of the signals that the trains call between Bristol and Greeneville, TN. This list includes station mile post, signal mile post, detector milepost including stations and radio transmitters. Hope you enjoy. Please note Centralized Train Control and Track Warrants (CTC) are at the following locations.

Bristol to Piney Flats CTC  
Piney Flats to Sand Valley Track Warrant  
Sand Valley to Telford CTC  
Telford to Jones Track Warrant  
Jones to Radar CTC  
Radar to Justice Track Warrant

Radio towers between Bristol and Bulls Gap. 160.56 Channel 1 and 161.040 Channel 2

Bristol Yard Office  
Buffalo Mtn  
Washington College  
Greeneville Station  
Bulls Gap.  
Justice to Knoxville MP 130 CTC

#### SIGNALS ON NORFOLK SOUTHERN A – LINE BRISTOL TO GREENEVILLE

MP 0 A-LINE STARTS at STATE STREET (CTC TO PINEY FLATS)  
MP 0.3 FORD  
MP 3.4 UNIVERSAL  
MP 6.0 VANCE  
MP 8.8 UNNAMED  
MP 11.8 BLUFF CITY  
MP 12.9 DETECTOR  
MP 13.7 CURTIS  
MP 15.7 PINEY FLATS (TRACK WARRANT PINEY FLATS TO SAND VALLEY)  
MP 18.5 WATAUGA  
MP 20.9 UNNAMED  
MP 23.3 JOHNSON CITY CHEMICAL  
MP 24.0 CARNIGIE YARD  
MP 26.3 WEST SIDING (BEHIND CARNIGIE HOTEL)  
MP 27.2 DETECTOR (BELOW JC MEDICAL CENTER)  
MP 29.6 JOHNSON CITY IRON AND METAL  
MP 31.7 JONESBOROUGH (1.2 MILES EAST OF WATV COACH YARD) APPROACH TO SAND VALLEY  
MP 32.5 WATAUGA VALLEY COACH YARD  
MP 33.1 CHUCKEY DEPOT AT JONESBOROUGH  
MP 35.9 SAND VALEY SIDING CTC (SIDING 2 MILES LONG) EAST END  
MP 37.9 TELFORD SIDING CTC (SIDING 2 MILES LONG) WEST END TRACK WARRANT TELFORD TO JONES SIDING.

MP 40.3	WASHINGTON COLLEGE (ALSO DETECTOR LOCATED AT SIGNAL) APPROACH TO TELFORD
MP 43.7	LIMESTONE
MP 46.5	CHUCKEY
MP 49.5	AFTON SIDING EAST END
MP 50.6	AFTRON SIDING WEST END
MP 52.3	GREENEVILLE IRON METAL
MP 52.9	DETECTOR
MP 54.3	OLE PIGGY BACK TRACK
MP 56.5	GREENEVILLE DEPOT

## *In the News ...*

### *Ted Laws Painting Moved*

The Ted Laws painting of N&W 1218 and Clinchfield 500 (WATX 100) has been moved from the Jonesborough Library after being on display many years. Please go by Arby's at 405 East Jackson Blvd. in Jonesborough to see the painting's new home.

### *2020 N&W Historical Society Convention Cancelled*

[Posted by the N&W Historical Society] The 2020 NWHS Convention in Cleveland is postponed to 2021. It's not completely official yet, but please assume it's not going to happen in 2020 and plan accordingly. We didn't want further uncertainty for you all in your planning, as it may not be "official" for a few more weeks.

[NWHS] is supposed to say this was a difficult decision. It was not. Looking at the potential downside and what's going on around us it almost became a no-brainer. It's very sad, and very tough to deal with, considering how important the annual convention is and the amount of work we've put into it.

It's not official yet, as we are still working out the financial details of the cancellation with the hotel. Right now, there's a penalty for cancelling or postponing the convention. We are highly confident that this will be resolved soon either negotiating with the hotel or by government edict. Meanwhile, we have tentatively rescheduled the convention, hopefully the same program, with the hotel, Age of Steam, Warthers, and the bus line, for the same weekend in 2021. If you've registered for the convention already, you may ask for a refund, or just tell us to hold onto your registration for next year. Refunds will be issued in full upon request, but please allow some time: multiple people working from home have to get payment records, addresses together and someone will have to write out a stack of checks.

### *2020 NRHS Convention on Hold*

As of publishing this newsletter, the 2020 NRHS Convention has been placed on hold. From the NRHS web site:

"The 2020 NRHS National Convention in southern California has been put on hold, due to the current virus pandemic. The NRHS Board of Directors and the [continued on next page]

Convention Committee are monitoring the situation, and are considering moving the convention to late Summer-early Fall. Please be patient and check back for updates.”

## *Truck Driver Hits Train in Southwest Virginia*

[WDBJ7.com, Roanoke, VA] A conductor is being treated at a hospital after a train was hit by a tanker truck Monday afternoon [April 20]. The incident happened near Walton Rd. in Montgomery County. According to a county spokesperson, the driver of a tanker truck carrying Roundup weed killer hit the train. Some Roundup spilled, but it has been contained. The train had propane on it, and crews were working to remove it as a precaution. “We were a little concerned about that but the fire crews that were on scene got that taken care of very quickly when they got here, so it was contained to a very minor spill,” said emergency services coordinator Michael Geary.

The accident happened about half mile down the tracks from the intersection at Walton Rd. Because this part of the county is pretty rural, Geary said the public is in no danger. “Being in a more rural setting definitely helps us with keeping people safe and away from the scene,” Geary said. He said the tanker truck was out spraying weeds at the time of the collision.

## *CSX Earnings Decline*

[Trains News Wire] CSX Transportation on April 22 reported lower quarterly revenue and earnings as coal volume sank and broad pandemic-related traffic declines began. Like other railroads, CSX has adjusted its operations quickly as volume declined sharply due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. CSX’s traffic volume is down 20% this month through April 18.

CSX has stored 400 locomotives since the end of March, bringing its total active fleet below 2,000, says Jamie Boychuk, executive vice president of operations. Three years ago, before adopting scheduled railroading, the railroad had nearly 4,000 active locomotives, he says. As volume has declined, CSX has eliminated 50 daily merchandise train starts, a reduction of more than 20%, Boychuk says. Overall, the railroad has cut daily road train starts by 23%.



If you look hard enough you’ll find remnants of the old Clinchfield that still survive out there in the rail industry. During a recent visit to the Maryland Midland Railway track in Woodsboro, MD, “High Green” [Chesapeake Railway Assoc.] editor Tim Moriarty found six former Clinchfield hopper cars. These are numbered MMID 4056 (in the photo above), 4005, 4050, 4005, 4015, and 4003. All six were built in 1976 or 1978 and, after years of hard service, all are slated for scrapping.

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# Photo Gallery ...

This month's Photo Gallery showcases screenshots taken from our video cam located at the Chucky Depot. The web cam offers a variety of rail action and an amazing array of NS Heritage locomotives (Wabash and PRR below). NS #3261 (upper left) is a GP38-2; would be interesting to know where that AMTRAK baggage car is headed. Gary Price is the person to ask regarding description of the MoW equipment on the flat car.



## PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2020

We're looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2020. Please call (423) 753-5797 or let us know at the next General Membership Meeting if you have an interest in presenting a program. We're looking for DVD and slide programs and also speakers who could present a railroad-related program.

***Whistle Stop***

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