

# Whistle Stop



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



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Newly renovated ex-CRR 1111, the last operating Clinchfield caboose, was officially opened Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, in Unicoi, TN after the car's renovation. The full story can be found on page 5.

## *November 23<sup>rd</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St. Jonesborough, TN. Our program this month will be presented by Howard Orfield on Clinchfield 100 on the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Train in 2019. This is a program you do not want to miss. We will also be discussing our 2021 train excursions. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great program. Everyone is asked to wear a mask; social distancing will be strictly enforced.

Happy  
Thanksgiving

A decorative illustration for Thanksgiving featuring a cornucopia overflowing with pumpkins, gourds, and autumn leaves, positioned above the text.

## *Member Notes*

### *By Edna Kay Carter*

Please keep Jack Maloney in your thoughts and prayers in the recent loss of his Aunt and other members who have lost loved ones this year.

Keep George Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Gary Price, Mike Dowdy and Billy Walker in your prayers as they deal with various health concerns. As always, let us know of 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.

It is almost renewal time for dues for the year 2021. We welcome Raymond Olson as a new member and look forward to working with him.

Hope all of you will have a good Thanksgiving and upcoming holiday season.

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### **2021 WATAUGA VALLEY OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS**

The 2021 WVRHS&M election ballots were mailed out in November. All ballots must be received by 12:01 pm, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020. A ballot box will be available at the November meeting or you can mail your ballot to Nominating Committee, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. The results of the election will be announced in December. Nominees are:

Mike Tilley, President; Bob Schubel, Vice President; Jeanie Walker, Treasurer  
Jim Smallwood, Secretary; Gary Price, Historian

Directors: Frank Gricus, Tony King, Scott Wise

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### **Watauga Valley Christmas Dinner Canceled**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been decided that we will cancel our annual Christmas Dinner in December. Also, there will not be a December membership meeting.

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### **DUES NOTICES FOR 2021**

The 2021 Dues Notices will be mailed out very soon. After receiving your notice, please get your dues payment back into Membership Chairman Edna Carter ASAP. Return to Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, ATTN: Edna Carter, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. You can join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum for \$20.00 individual and add family members at \$5.00 each. Any questions, email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### **LIBRARY DONATIONS**

Our library collection in Jonesborough continues to grow. We appreciate all the donations that have been made. Bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the office at (423) 753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books!

## *Mechanical Department Report*

*by Jim Magill*

### ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539), “Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): Both cars are at the NCTM in Spencer awaiting service on their Christmas Trains.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500), “Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Both cars are in Jonesborough receiving annual upgrades.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): Is in Jonesborough continuing to receive upgrades.



[Above left] Art Devoe and Gary Lombardi at work installing the gen set on Car 100. The other two photos are before and after shots of the compartment into which the motor fit.

## *Rail Excursions*

### NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> GREAT SMOKY MTN TRAIN EXCURSION

Our GSMR November 1<sup>st</sup> train excursion was very successful. This was the peak leaf change weekend and the weather was beautiful. With weather and the leaf colors, it made our trips the best of the season. We had over 400 happy passengers on 24 cars on the train.

### WVRHS&M 2021 EXCURSION SEASON

The Watauga Valley 2021 excursion season will start on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> with a trip through the Great Smoky Mountains. More details will be available in the coming weeks.



At left is a recent photo of the 1943 Porter that was used by the Bristol & Northwestern tourist railroad for switching operations, sitting in the weeds and rusting away in Bristol. Our *Moultrie* and *St. Augustine* came from this line, which ran in the early 1980s. You can't tell in this photo but the Porter has two engines with the cab in the middle. No one is sure what is going to happen to the engine but as it sits in the way of a proposed hiking trail it is sure to be moved. Additional photos of the Porter in better condition and happier times can be found on our web site. [Photo by Mike Tilley]

## Chuckey Depot and Museum



### ***CHUCKEY DEPOT MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH***

A “No Trespassing” sign has been installed at the Depot to keep visitors from wandering onto the tracks. Many folk are not aware of the dangers present on an active rail line.

Since the Museum was opened on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, we have had several thousand visitors at the depot and hundreds of volunteer hours. We want to thank all 90 WVRHS&M volunteers who have been trained to host at the museum. We are planning more training sessions in 2021. If you would like to be trained to host at the museum, please call 423-753-5797 and leave a message or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com). Everyone is having a good time at the museum; please come and volunteer one day a month for four hours.

### ***VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE SANTA TRAIN***

The WVRHS&M Santa Train Exhibit will be held on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at the Chuckey Depot in Jonesborough at 110 South Second St. from 12 pm to 3 pm. WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough will sponsor the event. Everyone is welcome to come out and bring their children and see Santa on our caboose. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **children will not enter the caboose nor sit on Santa’s lap**. Santa will instead be on the platform waving at the children as they go into the Chuckey Depot. We will need volunteers to help at this event. Please volunteer by signing the sheet at the November 23<sup>rd</sup> General Membership meeting, emailing [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) or calling 423-753-5797. This will be some good publicity for us as we are expecting a lot of people to come by and see Santa on the red caboose.

## For Your Viewing Pleasure ....

### ***👉 Rebuilding a Steam Locomotive***

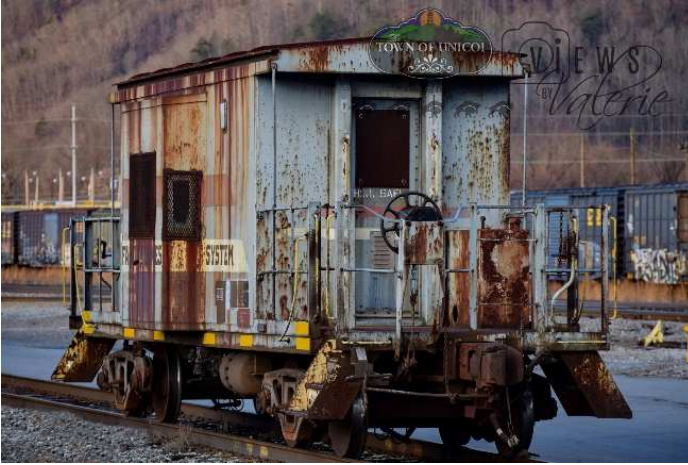
For a fascinating look into the effort behind rebuilding a steam locomotive, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yyof9cm5>. Featured is the complete restoration of Sumpter Valley Railroad’s narrow gauge 2-8-2 #19 in eastern Oregon. The 50-minute clip also serves as a visual study on the inner workings of a steamer.

### ***👉 H. Reid Film Collection Volume 7: Steam in the 50's – VGN, N&W***

Volume 7 features more of the Virginian, N&W, and more steam in the mid to late 1950's. Video on <https://tinyurl.com/yxemq2j5>; from SCM Railfan Productions. Other volumes of H. Reid films of regional interest can be found by searching YouTube.

## *In the News*

### *CRR 1111 Renovation*



**CRR 1111 as it arrived in Unicoi**

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, ex-CRR caboose 1111 was officially dedicated and opened to the public after renovation. Gifted to the town of Unicoi, TN by the Clinchfield Railroad Museum, the “Eleven Eleven” was commissioned in 1981 and was the last Clinchfield caboose put into service.

CSX Transportation, which bought the Clinchfield Railroad in the early 1980s, gave the caboose to the museum but the National Fish Hatchery System, which owns the property in Erwin, TN where the museum is located, would not allow it to be placed on the property. The museum then offered the prized

relic of local railroading history to the town of Unicoi, whose leaders readily accepted the gift in recognition of its significance in the heritage of many of the town residents.

With more than \$4,000 in donated and discounted materials and labor, the cost of the move from Erwin to Unicoi came in at a little more than \$4,700. Upon arrival, the car was cleaned, sanded and repainted in the French gray with red and yellow accents scheme used during the Eleven Eleven’s operation on successor L&N Family Lines System.

Situated at the Unicoi Tourists Information and Visitors Center, the town plans to use the caboose as a museum that will include an honors roster of Unicoi residents who worked for the railroad as well as information about other railroad history sites and events in the region.

### *Kingsport Model Train Project*

The Kingsport [TN] Model Train Project has moved its Santa Claus special from Lynn View High School to the former Lynn Garden Hardware store at 1113 Lynn Garden Drive. The plan is to be open Saturdays from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm and Tuesdays from 4:00 until 6:00 pm from November 21 through December 22, COVID permitting. All the usual precautions apply: temperature checks, masks required and social distancing enforced. You must make



a reservation on Facebook to visit the layout. Groups will be limited to four people for a 15-minute visit. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/KingsportModelTrainsProject> for more information.

## *Norfolk Southern Gifting Historic "Marco Polo"*

Norfolk Southern Corporation is gifting the historic *Marco Polo* rail car, a car President Franklin D. Roosevelt used while in office, to the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, Georgia.

The Pullman Company built the *Marco Polo* in 1927 as part of a small fleet of cars named for world explorers, reserving them for VIPs who chartered their own railcar. Roosevelt traveled in the car when he was governor of New York and later as president, using it on trips to and from Warm Springs, Georgia.



[Southeastern Railway Museum photo]

The car was scheduled to arrive at the museum at 11 a.m. on Nov. 14, with a brief unveiling ceremony following.

The museum plans to display the car on its 35-acre campus alongside the *Superb*, a Pullman car used by President Warren G. Harding.

"The *Marco Polo* is a critical piece of railroad history, and we are honored Norfolk Southern has entrusted us to help preserve the railcar and its story for future generations," said Sue Kelly, interim executive director of the Southeastern Railway Museum. "Railroads played an invaluable role in transporting presidents across the country. President Roosevelt had a unique connection to Georgia, and on his trips to Warm Springs, he regularly passed through Duluth and by what is today the museum, and we're excited to welcome the car back home."

The car also transported many dignitaries over the years, including Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the wife of China's wartime president. She used the *Marco Polo* during a United States tour in 1943.

"The *Marco Polo* holds a unique place in Norfolk Southern history, and we couldn't think of a more appropriate location for the car to be displayed than at the Southeastern Railway Museum," said John Friedmann, Norfolk Southern VP Network Planning & Optimization. "As we move our headquarters to Atlanta, forging relationships with surrounding communities like Duluth and organizations dedicated to preserving railroads like Southeastern Railway Museum will be critical to making Atlanta feel even more like home."

The Central of Georgia, a Norfolk Southern predecessor railroad, bought the car in 1944 and converted it into an office. The Southern Railway assumed ownership of the car in 1963 after it merged with the Central of Georgia.

Over the years, the railroad has displayed the car, which was later renamed the *Savannah*, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and at Union Station in Washington, D.C. For more than 25 years, Washington commuters walked past the *Marco Polo*, most not knowing the railcar's history as a predecessor to Air Force 1.

## *NS Derailment in Virginia*



[WDBJ-TV photo]

the Roanoke River, and a dozen of 22 rail cars that derailed fell into the river, causing about 2000 tons of coal to fall out.

The Virginia Department of Emergency and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality responded to the incident and have been coordinating on removing the rail cars and coal from the river, according to the press release.

Officials said that DEQ is working with local, state and federal agencies as well as Norfolk Southern to collect samples to determine if there have been any impacts to water quality.

Out of an abundance of caution, Salem is currently withdrawing water from groundwater wells and not the Roanoke River until water samples of the river can be analyzed, according to officials.

WDBJ TV offered [the above] view from a drone. This bridge was an original 1909 steel bridge.

There was a serious derailment on the former Virginian near Glenvar, VA on [October 30]. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Roanoke County officials responded to the train derailment incident in a press release.

Officials said that a Norfolk Southern Corp. bridge collapsed in Roanoke County near Barley Drive [October 30] around 10:15 p.m. The bridge collapsed while a train carrying coal was crossing



## *DRG Motor Car*

[Info from Doe River Gorge Ministries web page; photo via Mike Tilley] This Fairmont A-4 "gang car" was used by the Union Pacific Railroad in the Cheyenne, WY area and would haul track maintenance gangs and a few small trailers with supplies and tools. It was purchased by DRG Ministries in early 2005, then disassembled and modified from the original standard gauge (56.5 inch) to fit on DRG's [ex-ET&WNC] 36-inch track.

It is powered by a 4-cylinder Ford gas engine with a 4-speed manual transmission. An independent reverse allows use of all 4 gears in either direction. Plans call for the speeder to haul the "inner tubers" for whitewater tubing.

The photo at left shows the car, painted in ET&WNC scheme, leaving Tunnel #2 in the Doe River Gorge.

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